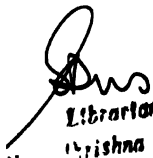


The
Old Manar House.
vol. - 2.


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THE
OLD MANOR HOUSE.



C H A P. I.

ON the following morning Orlando received an early summons from his father, requesting him to be at home by two o'clock, when his mother, his sister, and General Tracy were expected; for, as the General travelled with his own four horses, which were very fine ones, and of which he was particularly fond, the ladies had agreed to remain one night on the road, and reach home early the second day; though the journey was otherwise easily performed in one, West Wolverton being only about sixty-five miles from London.

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Orlando having informed Mrs. Rayland of the reason of his absence ; having seen Monimia for a moment, again whispered to her to be less apprehensive for his safety, and promising to see her at night, he proceeded to obey his father. On his arrival, he found him walking with the General on the grass plot before the door ; and, springing from his horse, paid his duty to him, was introduced in form to the General, and then eagerly asked for his mother and his sister.

They were within ; and Orlando, flying to them, was surprised by his mother's throwing her arms around him, and falling into an agony of tears, in which his three sisters, who stood around her, accompanied her. He entreated an explanation ; and learned from Isabella, who alone was able to speak, that the servants had been telling them, instantly on their arrival at home, that he was about to fight a duel, in which it was the opinion of the informers that he must certainly be killed.

Orlando,

Orlando, execrating the folly of the servants, or rather the paltry conduct of Sir John Belgrave, who had apparently made all this bustle on purpose, endeavoured to re-assure and console his mother; but her alarm for his safety was too great to allow her to listen patiently to any thing he could say, since the fact of his having received and accepted a challenge from Sir John Belgrave he did not attempt to deny. The anxious mother, now that she saw him before her, thought only of preventing the meeting which might deprive her of that comfort for ever. She seemed afraid of his stirring from her sight, as if Sir John Belgrave had lurked in every corner of the house; and desired he would remain with her in her own room, while she sent Isabella to entreat that Mr. Somerive would come to her.

When he saw her, her tears and agitation sufficiently explained to him, that those whom he had expressly ordered to be silent had found it impossible to obey him. To

Selina and Emma, the two youngest girls, who had remained at home, it had been known almost as soon as to himself, but he had enjoined them to conceal it from their mother ; and knew that, whatever it cost them to be silent on such a subject, neither of them would disobey him. It was, however, too late, or at least useless, to declaim against the folly of those who *had* ; and he found sufficient employment in appeasing the distress of his wife and daughters, while he sent Orlando to entertain the General.

General Tracy was the second brother of a noble family ; and, having entered very young into the army, had passed through the inferior ranks with that rapidity which interest always secures. At five-and-thirty he had a regiment ; and as some of the fortunes of uncles and aunts had centred in him, he was now, at near sixty, a man of very large fortune, and seemed to want nothing to complete his happiness, but the power of persuading others, as he had almost

most persuaded himself, that he was but five-and-thirty still.

To effect this, and maintain that favour which he had always been in among the ladies, was the great object of his life. His person had been celebrated for beauty ; and he desired to preserve a pre-eminence, which was in his opinion superior to any fame he could derive from his bravery in the field, or his ability in the senate, where he had long been a member, certainly voting with the minister of the day. He had a place about the court, at which he was a constant attendant, and where the softness and elegance of his manners, the pliability of his political attachments, and his very considerable interest and property, rendered him a great favourite.—All the time he could spare from his duty there, he seemed to devote to the service of those fashionable women who give the ton, and whose favour he disputed with the rising heroes of the fashionable world. But he felt in reality only disgust and satiety in their company ;

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and had no taste but for youth and beauty, of which he was continually in search—and with his fortune his search could not be unsuccessful. He had no scruples to deter him from decoying any young woman whom he liked, that chance might throw into his power; but he usually avoided with care any scheme which was likely to be interrupted by the unpleasant remonstrances of a father or a brother, and generally pursued only the indigent and the defenceless.

As he purchased his wine of Mr. Woodford, he had occasionally been at his house. His daughters were rather handsome, and very lively girls; and though they did not come exactly under the description of those whose preference the General could without much trouble secure, he found himself pleased with their company, because they were greatly flattered by the admiration of such a fashionable man, and never so happy as when the General sent his superb coach for them, and gallanted them to some public place, or drove them in his phaeton.

through.

through Hyde Park to Kensington Gardens. Their father, who thought more of the good customer which the General was himself, and the great families he had recommended him to, than of any necessity for reserve in his daughters, encouraged this acquaintance (which their mother was as well pleased with as the young women) till the neighbourhood talked loudly of their indiscretion, and till the youngest Miss Woodford, who was his peculiar favourite, was declared by many ladies to have considerably injured her reputation. This she herself considered only as a testimony of their envy, and her own superior attractions; and the more she heard of their malignant remarks, the more eagerly she endeavoured to shew her contempt of their opinion, and her power over the General, who, on the return of the family to town after their visit to West Wolverton, was more than usual at the house. But thither he was no longer attracted by the charms of Miss Eliza Woodford. The moment he beheld

Isabella Somerive, he had no eyes for any other person; and though he soon learned that she was in a situation of life which placed her above those temptations which he generally found infallible, and had a father and two brothers to protect her, the impression she had made was such that he could not determine to lose sight of her; and as the discovery of the preference he gave her had made both her cousins very little desirous of her company in London during the winter, where she seemed too likely to rob them of all their conquests, he found she was to return home with her mother—and thither he resolved to follow her.

An opportunity of introducing himself into the family of Somerive was easily obtained, when he recollected that, in the preceding war, Somerive, in whose own county there was at that time no militia, had, being then an active man, procured a commission in that of a neighbouring country, and served in a camp then formed for
the.

the defence of the coast, where he himself was a captain. They had at that time been frequently together, and afterwards kept up some degree of intimacy, till Somerive's marriage fixing him wholly in retirement, the gay and fashionable soldier thought of him no more.

The General, however, no sooner knew who the visitors at Woodford's were, than he most assiduously and successfully paid his court to Mrs. Somerive; talked to her continually of her husband, whose merits he affected to remember with infinite regard, and for whose interest he appeared to feel the warmest concern. It was a theme of which Mrs. Somerive, who adored her husband, was never weary; and while General Tracy so pathetically lamented the interruption of their friendship, nothing was more natural than her entreaties to him that he would renew it.

That was the point he had laboured to gain, and he accepted the invitation she gave him, adding the opportunity of the

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shooting season to his other inducements, the better, to colour so unexpected a visit. He had found it convenient to pretend a great passion for field sports—partly because it was fashionable, and partly because it shewed that his powers of enduring fatigue were equal to the youthful appearance he assumed ; and to support this, he now and then went through, what was to him most miserable drudgery, that of a day's hunting or shooting ; but he more usually contrived, when he was at the houses of his friends for these purposes, to sprain his ankle in the first excursion he made, or to hurt himself by the recoil of his gun : and by such methods he generally managed to be left without suspicion at home with the ladies ; with whom he was so universal a favourite, and to whom he had so many ways of recommending himself, by deciding on their dress, reading to them books of entertainment, and relating anecdotes collected in the higher circles where he moved in the winter, that he found no loss of attention from

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from

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from the progress of years—a progress indeed which he took the utmost pains to conceal. His clothes, which were always made by the most eminent taylor, were cut with as much care as those of the most celebrated beauty on her first appearance at court; and he had several contrivances, of his own invention, to make them fit with advantage to his person. His hands were more delicate than those of any lady; and though he could not so totally baffle the inexorable hands of time as to escape a few wrinkles, he still maintained a considerable share of the bloom of youth, not without suspicion of Olympian dew, cold cream, and Spanish wool. Certain it is that he was very long at his toilet every day, to which no person, not even his valet-de-chambre, was admitted. With all this he was a man of the most undoubted bravery; and had not only served in Germany with great credit, but had been engaged in several affairs of honour, in which he had always acquitted himself with courage and

propriety.

propriety. Such was the man who was now, from no very honourable motives, become an inmate in the house of Mr. Somerive,

When Mr. Somerive had appeased the distress into which his wife was thrown by the intelligence she had so abruptly received about Orlando, and had prevailed upon her to compose herself and appear at dinner, he returned back to his friend, whom he found in conversation with Orlando; and he determined that he would, over their wine, relate to him what had passed between Sir John Belgrave and his son (who had put Sir John's last letter into his hands), and take the General's opinion as to what was fit to be done.

Dinner was announced, and the ladies of the family appeared;—the mother, with swollen eyes, which she could not a moment keep from Orlando; and the daughters appearing to sympathize with her, particularly Selina, who was fondly attached to Orlando, and who, from the terror in which
 she

she saw her mother, having caught redoubled apprehension, could hardly command her tears; and though the General failed not to compliment her on her beauty, which even exceeded that of her sister, and to speak in the warmest terms to Mr. and Mrs. Somerive of their lovely family, Selina heeded him not. He observed that Isabella was less insensible of his studied eulogiums, and from thence drew a favourable omen. Emma, the youngest of the girls, was only between twelve and thirteen.

As soon as the table-cloth was removed, Mrs. Somerive, under pretence of being a good deal fatigued with her journey, and somewhat indisposed, withdrew with her daughters; Mr. Somerive soon after gave Orlando a hint to go also; and then he opened to General Tracy the affair which lay so heavy on his heart, and entreated his advice how to act.

“I am glad,” answered the General,
“to learn the cause of Mrs. Somerive’s
concern.”

concern, which was so evident at dinner, as well as that of her amiable daughters, that I was afraid some very disagreeable incident had happened in the family."

"And is not," said Mr. Somerive, "what I have related disagreeable enough?"

"No, upon my honour! I see nothing in it but what is rather a matter of exultation. Your son is one of the finest and most spirited young men I ever saw. If he was a son of my own, I should rejoice that he had acted so properly, and be very proud of him."

"But you would not risk his life, surely?" said Mr. Somerive.

"Why, as to that," replied the General, "in these cases there is some little risk, to be sure; but I should never check a lad of spirit. I know Belgrave," added he, smiling.

"And what is his reputation for courage?" enquired Mr. Somerive.

"Oh! he is quite the fine man of the day,"

day," answered the General carelessly.—
"He will fight, if he must—but I believe is quite as willing to let it alone."

"It will break my wife's heart," said Mr. Somerive dejectedly, and amazed at the different light in which two people, from their different modes of life, consider the same object; "it will certainly break my wife's heart, if any evil befalls Orlando."

General Tracy now saw that an opportunity offered by which he might confer an obligation on the family, which must secure their endless gratitude, and he resolved to embrace it.

"If it makes you all so uneasy," replied he, after a moment's pause, "and especially if her fears make Mrs. Somerive so very wretched, suppose we try what can be done to put an end to the affair without a meeting. I dare say Belgrave will easily be induced, on the slightest apology, to drop the affair entirely."

"But even the slightest apology Orlando will

will not be persuaded to make," said Mr. Somerive.

"He is right," answered the General; "and I honour him for his resolution. It is a thousand pities," continued he, again pausing, "that such a gloriously spirited young fellow should waste his life in seclusion, waiting on the caprices of an old woman——What do you intend to do with him?"

"That," said Somerive, "is what I have long been in doubt about. I had thoughts once of putting him into trade; but to that project Mrs. Rayland's objections, and Orlando's little inclination to follow it, put an end."

"I am glad they did; for it would have been a sad sacrifice, I think, to have set so fine a young man down to a counting-house desk for the rest of his life."

"And at other times," re-assumed Mr. Somerive, "I have thought of the church. Mrs. Rayland has very considerable patronage; but though I have hinted very frequently

quently to her my wishes on this subject, she never would understand me, to give me any assurance that she would secure him a living ; or make any offer of assistance to support him at the university, which she knows that it is quite impossible for me, circumstanced as I am at present, to do."

"She was in the right of it," cried the General. "The old lady has more sagacity than I suspected, and knows that it would be absolutely a sin to make him a parson, and bury all that sense and spirit in a country vicarage. Why, my good friend, do you not put your son into the army?—that seems to be the profession for which nature has designed him."

"Because," answered Somerive, "I have, in the first place, no money to buy him a commission ; and, if I had, there are two great objections to it :—it would half kill his mother, and take him out of the way of Mrs. Rayland, which appears to be very impolitic."

"What if a commission were found for him,"

him," said General Tracy, "do you think the other objections ought to weigh much? Consider of it, my good friend; and if you think such a plan would be eligible, and the young man himself likes it, perhaps it may be in my power to be of some use to you."

Mr. Somerive warmly expressed his gratitude for the interest that his friend seemed to take in the welfare of his Orlando; and then, after a short silence, said: "But, my dear General, we forget, while we are planning schemes for the future life of Orlando, it may be terminated to-morrow."

"Well," replied he, "since I see you cannot conquer your alarm about this matter, and as I am still more concerned for Mrs. Somerive, I will go over early in the morning to Belgrave, who has wisely appointed the meeting at twelve o'clock, and somehow or other we will get it settled.—If I say to the doughty baronet, that his honour will suffer nothing by dropping it, I am pretty well assured that he will be content."

content to let it go no farther. Make yourself easy therefore, and go tell your wife that I will take care of her little boy; while I pay my respects to the young ladies whom I see walking in the garden."

Somerive, whose heart was agonized by the distress of his wife, hastened to relieve her; and the General went off at a quick march to overtake the three Miss Somerives, to whom he related some part of the conversation that had passed between him and their father, and the task he had undertaken of settling the affair with Sir John Belgrave.

The sensible hearts of these charming girls were filled with the liveliest emotions towards the General, who, if he could save their brother from danger, which their timidity had dreadfully magnified, they believed would be entitled to their everlasting gratitude. The brilliant eyes of Isabella sparkled with pleasure, while the softer blue eyes of Selina were turned towards him filled with tears of pleasure; and little

Emma

Emma longed to embrace him, as she used to do her father when he had granted any of her infantine requests. While every one alternately expressed her thanks, Tracy whispered to Isabella, by whose side he was walking: "To give the slightest pleasure to my lovely Isabella, I would do infinitely more; and, rather than she should be alarmed, take myself the chance of Sir John Belgrave's fire."

Isabella, too ignorant of the ways of the world to be either offended or alarmed by such a speech, and naturally pleased by flattery and admiration, smiled on the enamoured General in a manner, so fascinating as overpaid him for all the trouble he had taken or proposed to take: and while he meditated against his old friend the greatest injury he could commit, he reconciled himself to it, by determining to do such services to the other part of the family, as would more than compensate for the inroads he might make on its peace by carrying off Isabella; for to carry her off he was resolved,

ed, if his art could effect it. His eagerness, however, to serve Orlando, had another motive than this of retribution. He foresaw that so spirited a young man might prevent, or, not being able to do that, would very seriously resent his designs upon a sister : the character of the elder brother, of which he had by this time formed a pretty clear idea, left him little to apprehend from him ; but the fiery and impetuous Orlando would, he thought, be much better out of the way.

His conversation with the Miss Somerives now took a gayer turn ; and so happy did he feel himself with three such nymphs around him, that he regretted the summons which called them in to attend the tea-table.

Mrs. Somerive, who had now been long in conference with her husband, and afterwards with Orlando, appeared much more cheerful than at dinner, and surveyed the General with those looks of complacency which expressed how much she was obliged to

to him for the interference he had promised. The evening passed off pleasantly. Orlando staid to supper; but then told his father, that he had some business to do for Mrs. Rayland early the next day (which was true), and therefore he would return to the Hall that evening. Mr. Smerive, who still felt a dread which he could not conquer, entreated him to give his word of honour, that he would not throw himself in the way of Sir John Belgrave till the hour of that gentleman's appointment. This Orlando (who was ignorant of the plans in agitation to prevent that appointment from taking place at all) thought himself obliged to comply with: on which condition his father, though reluctantly, suffered him at midnight to mount his horse and return to Rayland Hall, where he had desired Betty to sit up for him; fearful of entering through the chapel, lest his dog should lead to those suspicions he was so desirous of avoiding. As soon as he left his father's door,

"he

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he put his horse into a gallop, impatient to be with Monimia; and as he crossed the park, he saw a light in her turret, and pleased himself with the idea of her fondly expecting his arrival.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

ORLANDO, on his entering the servants' hall, found Betty waiting for him as she had promised. "Lord, Sir," cried she as soon as he appeared, "I tho't as you'd never come! Why it's almost half past one o'clock, and I be frighted out of my seven senses sitting up so all alone." "I beg your pardon, dear Betty!" replied he; "but I could not get away sooner. I'll never detain you so long again; and now suffer me to make you what amends I can, by desiring your acceptance of this." He presented her with a crown, which she looked at a moment, and then, archly leering at him, said, "Humph! if you give folks a crown for sitting up for you in the kitchen, I suppose they as bides with you in your study have double price."

"Come,

“Come, come, Betty,” said Orlando, impatient to escape from her troublesome enquiries, “let me hear no more of such nonsense. I have nobody ever in my study, as you know very well. It is very late—I wish you a good night.”

He then, without attending to her farther, as she seemed still disposed to talk, took his candle and went to his own apartment ; where after waiting about a quarter of an hour, till he thought her retired and the whole house quiet, he took his way to the turret.

Monimia had long expected him, and now received him with joy chastised by the fear which she felt on enquiring into the events of the day. Orlando related to her all that he thought would give her pleasure, and endeavoured that she should understand the affair of the next day settled, for he would not violate truth by positively asserting it ; and Monimia, apprehensive of teasing him by her enquiries, stifled as much as she could the pain she endured from this uncertainty. This she found it

better to do, as she observed Orlando to be restless and dissatisfied: he complained of the misery he underwent in his frequent absences, and of the unworthy excuses he was compelled to make. He expressed impatiently the long unhappiness he had in prospect, if he could never see her but thus clandestinely, and risking every moment her fame and her peace. Monimia, however, soothed him, by bidding him remember how lately it was that they both thought themselves too happy to meet upon any terms; and would very fain have inspired him with hopes that they might soon look forward to fairer prospects, hopes which he had often tried to give her. But, alas! she could not communicate what she did not feel; and whichever way they cast their eyes, all was despair as to their ever being united with the consent of those friends on whom they were totally dependent.

Orlando, most solicitous for the peace of Monimia, had never been betrayed before into these murmurings in her presence; forgetting

forgetting the threatening aspect of the future, while he enjoyed the happiness that was present. But all that had passed during the day, had assisted in making him discontented. His mother's tears and distress, the tender fears of his sisters, and the less evident, but more heavy anxiety which he saw oppressed his father, all contributed to convince him that, in being of so much consequence to his family, he lost the privilege of pleasing himself; that his duty and his inclination must be for ever at variance; and that, if he could resign the hopes of being settled in affluence by Mrs. Rayland, he still could not marry Monimia, without making his family unhappy—unless indeed he had the means of providing for her, of which at present there appeared not the least probability. Mrs. Rayland seemed likely to live for many years; or, if she died, it was very uncertain whether she would give him more than a trifling legacy. When he reflected on his situation, he became ashamed of thus spending his life, of wasting the best of his days in the hope

of that which might never happen ; while Monimia, almost a prisoner in her little apartment, passed the day in servitude, and divided the night between uneasy expectation, hazardous conference, and fruitless tears.

It was these thoughts that gave to Orlando that air of impatience and anxiety, which even in the presence of Monimia he could not so far conquer but that she observed it, before he broke through the restraint he had hitherto imposed on himself, and indulged those fears which he had so often entreated her to check.

At length, however, the hope she affected to feel, the charm of finding himself so fondly beloved, and that his Monimia was prepared to meet any destiny with him, restored him to that temper which he was in when he proposed to brave the discovery of their attachment. With difficulty she persuaded him to leave her about three o'clock. He glided softly down stairs ; and when he came out of the lower room of the turret, he found the night so very dark
that

that he could not see his hand. He knew the way, however, so well, that he walked slowly but fearlessly on, and had nearly reached the chapel-door when he found his feet suddenly entangled ; and before he could either disengage himself or discover what it was that thus impeded his way, somebody ran against him, whom he seized, and loudly demanded to know who it was.

“ And who are you ? ” replied a deep surly voice : “ let me go, or it shall be the worst day’s work you ever did in your life.”

Orlando, now convinced that he had taken the fellow who had so insolently intruded upon him, and so cruelly alarmed Monimia, felt himself provoked to punish him for his past insolence, and deter him from repeating it : he therefore firmly grasped his prisoner, who seemed a very stout fellow ; and who struggled violently for his release—so violently indeed that Orlando, exerting all his strength, threw him down ; but, in doing so, the rope

which he had at first trod upon being in the way, he fell also : still however he held his antagonist fast, and, kneeling upon him, said resolutely, “ Whoever you are, I will detain you here till day-light, unless you instantly tell me your name and business.”

“ Curse your strength ?” replied the fallen foe ; “ if I was not a little boozy, I’d be d—d before you should have the better of me.”

“ Who are you ?” again repeated Orlando.

“ Why, who the plague should I be,” cried the man, “ but Jonas Wilkins ?—Ah ! Master Orlando, I know you too now well enough—Come, Sir, let ~~a~~body go : I know you’d scorn to do a poor man no harm.”

“ Jonas Wilkins !” exclaimed Orlando, who knew that to be the name of an outlawed smuggler, famous for his resolution, and the fears in which he was held by the custom-house officers—“ Jonas Wilkins ! And pray,” enquired Orlando releasing him, “ what may have brought you here, Mr. Jonas Wilkins ?”

“ Why,

“Why, I’ll tell you,” replied the fellow, “for I knows you to be a kind-hearted gentleman, and won’t hurt me. The truth of the matter then is—The butler of this here house; Master Pattenfon, is engaged a little matter in our business ! and when we gets a cargo, he stows it in Madam’s cellars, which lays along-side the house, and he have the means to open that door there in the wall, under that there old fig-tree, which nobody knows nothing about. So here we brings our goods until such time as we can carry it safely up the country, and we comes on dark nights to take it away.”

“And you were here on Monday night, were you not? and came into my room through the chapel?”

“Yes, that I did sure enough. Ah! Master Orlando ! I think we’ve cotch’d one another.”

“If that be the case,” replied Orlando, “it would have been well if we had kept one another’s secrets. Why did you speak of having seen one in my room?”

“Egod, old Pattenfon was down in the cellar

cellar himself, for we were helping up some heavy goods that night : I don't know what a devil ail'd me, but I thought I'd just give a look into your room, where, you must know, before you comed to live, we used now and then to put a few kegs or so upon a pinch—and, d—n it ! there was you with a pretty girl. Ah, Master Orlando ! who'd think you was such a fly one ?”

“ Well, but,” said Orlando, “ what occasion was there, Jonas, for your telling Pattenfon ?”

“ To tease the old son of a b——,” answered Jonas. “ Why don't you know that he's after Betty Richards, and as jealous as poison ? So I made him believe 'twas she.”

“ You made him believe !”

“ Aye, for it might be she or another.—Curse me if I saw who it was ! for you blow'd out the candle, whisk ! in a minute.”

Orlando, heartily glad to hear this, pursued his enquiry farther. “ Pray,” resumed he, “ tell me why some person a little while after cried out, Now ! now !”

“ Why,

“ Why, we thought that all was quiet ; and as I and ‘a comrade of mine was waiting for the goods, we were going to heave them up, and that was the signal—but you were plaguy quick-eared, and began to holla after us ! so we were forced to let the job alone till to-night, and Pattenfon let us out through the t’other part of the house. We’ve done the business now, and my comrades they be all off with the goods—I only staid to gather up our tools, because I be going another way.”

Orlando, now finding himself thus unexpectedly relieved from the difficulty of accounting for the circumstance of the night of alarm, was far from resenting the resistance his new acquaintance had made, or heeding the pain he felt from some bruises which he had received in the struggle ; but being rather pleased at this rencontre, and wishing to know how far the trade of the worshipful Mr. Pattenfon was likely to impede his future meetings with Monimia, he invited Jonas into his room, and told him he could give him, late as it was, a glass of wine.

Jonas accepted his invitation, but desired he might stay to coil up his ropes, which he deposited in the porch, and then followed Orlando, who had taken his hanger from the chimney where it usually hung, and put his pistols, which were both loaded, by him. These precautions were not meant against his guest, whom he did not suspect of any immediate intention to injure him, but to let him see that he was prepared against intrusion, from whatever motive it might be made, at any other time.

When the man made his appearance, Orlando, prepared as he was for the sight of a ruffian, felt something like horror. His dark countenance, shaded by two immense black eyebrows, his shaggy hair, and the fierce and wild expression of his eyes, gave a complete idea of one of Shakespeare's well-painted assassins; while, in contemplating his athletic form, Orlando wondered how he had been able a moment to detain him. He wore a dirty round frock stained with ochre, which looked like blood, and over it one of those thick great coats
which

which the vulgar call rascal-wrappers. Orlando poured him out a tumbler of wine; and bade him sit down. The fellow obeyed, drank off his wine; and then, after surveying the room, said, turning with a sly look to Orlando, "What, Master, she ben't here then to-night?"

"Pooh, pooh!" cried Orlando, "let's forget that, good Jonas!—your eyes deceived you, there was nobody here: and I assure you it was well you disappeared as you did, or you would have paid for your peeping," thewing one of his pistols.

"Aye, aye," answered Jonas, "you've got a pair of bull-dogs, I see!—and I," added he, pulling a pocket pistol from under his frock, "I've a terrier or two about me; and 'twas ten to one, Mr. Orlando, if I had not a given a pretty good guess who it was, that I had not taken you for an officer; and treated you with more sugar-plums than would have sat easy upon your stomach."

"We are good friends now, however," said Orlando; "so drink, Jonas, to our better acquaintance."

He then gave him another full tumbler of wine, and began to question him on his exploits. He found him one of those daring and desperate men, who, knowing they are to expect no mercy, disclaim all hope, and resolutely prey upon the society which has shaken them off. He had been drinking before Orlando met him; and now the wine with which Orlando plied him, and the voice of kindness with which he spoke to him, contributed to open his heart. Jonas disclosed to Orlando all their manœuvres; and it was not without astonishment that he found both Snelcraft the coachman and Pattenfon so deeply engaged among the smugglers, and deriving very considerable sums from the shelter they afforded them, and the participation of their illicit gains. Orlando found, that during the whole winter, in weather when no other vessels kept the sea, these adventurous men pursued their voyages, and carried their cargoes through the country in weather when "one's enemy's dog" would hardly be turned from the door.

Orlando

Orlando, after some consideration on the means of escaping that interruption which this combination among the servants in the house seemed to threaten, told the man, as if in confidence, that under the restraint he was in, in Mrs. Rayland's house, he sometimes found it convenient to go out after the family were in bed, to meet at a neighbouring town some friends whom Mrs. Rayland disliked he should see : and therefore, said he, " I wish, Jonas, that, as I should not wish to interrupt you, you would give me some signal on those nights when you are at work in the cellar."

This the smuggler readily promised, and they agreed upon the sign which should signify the importation or exportation of the merchandise of Mr. Pattenson from the cellars of his mistress.

Orlando, possessing this secret, flattered himself that his very extraordinary acquaintance would keep his word, and that the communication between the study and the apartment of Monimia might once more be open, without making her liable
to

to those terrors from which she had suffered so much.

“ The man, whom Orlando continued to behold with a mixture of horror and pity, was now nearly overcome with the wine he had drank, and began to tell long profling stories of his escapes and his exploits, in which he related instances of dauntless courage, tarnished however by brutish ferocity. At length Orlando reminded him that day was soon approaching, and saw him out of the chapel-door, repeating his assurances that nothing of what he had himself that night discovered should transpire. Orlando then fastened the chapel and the other doors, and betook himself to his repose—thinking less about the meeting that was to take place, as he believed, on the morrow, than on the recent discovery he had made, which nearly quieted his terrors in regard to Monimia’s having been seen ; and he impatiently longed for an opportunity to communicate to her the satisfaction which he hoped she would derive from this assurance.

The

The late hour at which he had gone to bed, and the fatigue of mind he had experienced the preceding day, occasioned it to be later than usual when Orlando awoke. He started up; and recollecting that he had some writing to finish for Mrs. Rayland, and that he was to meet Sir John Belgrave at twelve o'clock, he hastened to dress himself, and had hardly done so before he received a summons to attend his father, who waited for him as usual in the stable-yard.

He found Mr. Somerive again on horseback, and easily understood that his purpose was to keep him from his appointment, to which however he was positively determined to go. While his father, in a peculiar strain of dejection and concern, was yet talking to him as he leaned on the horse, Mrs. Lennard saw them from one of the windows; and having acquainted her lady, she, contrary to her usual reserved treatment of Mr. Somerive, sent down a very civil message requesting his company with Orlando to breakfast.

This invitation, so flattering because so
unusual

unusual, was of course accepted. Somerive knew that Mrs. Rayland was acquainted with the affair which hung over him with an aspect so threatening, and hoped that she would unite with him in persuading Orlando to those concessions which might yet afford the means of evading it, if the General's interposition should fail: instead of which, he found her elated with the idea of punishing the audacity of Sir John, fearless of any danger which in the attempt might happen to Orlando, and piquing herself on the supposition that in him had revived a spark of that martial and dauntless spirit which she had been taught to believe characterised the men of her family. She seemed surprised, and somewhat offended, at the alarm Mr. Somerive expressed; and hinted, in no very equivocal terms, that this timidity was the effect of that mixture of plebeian blood, from the alloy of which only Orlando, of all the family, seemed exempt; while Mr. Somerive, in his turn, beheld, with a degree of horror and disgust, a woman who, to gratify her pride or revenge

revenge her quarrel, on so trifling a subject, was ready to promote perhaps the death of one for whom she had appeared to feel some degree of affection.

With views and opinions so different, their conference was not likely to be either very long or very satisfactory. Mr. Somerive knew, that when Mrs. Rayland had once taken up an opinion, argument against it offended, but never convinced her; and that in proportion as her reasoning was feeble, her resolution was firm. Thus baffled in his hopes of her effectual interposition, and seeing that Orlando was bent upon keeping his appointment, of which the hour was now at hand, Mr. Somerive sat awhile silent, mortified and wretched—hoping, yet fearing, for the success of the General's interposition, and considering what he should do if it failed.

He had just determined to obtain a warrant immediately, and to put both parties under arrest, when a servant brought to him the following letter :

“ MY DEAR SIR;

“ I AM now with Sir John Belgrave; and as I know the very natural and tender solicitude which you and your amiable family are under, I lose not a moment in doing myself the pleasure to assure you, that Sir John consents to give the matter up, and that without any concessions from your son that may be derogatory to his honour. If Sir John allows me to say that he is sorry for what has passed, it can surely not be too much for Mr. Orlando to make to him the same concession. I have great satisfaction in communicating to you the success of my sincere endeavours to be serviceable, and have the honour to be,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Your most devoted servant,

“ CHARLES-FERDINAND TRACY.”

Mr. Somerive read this billet with a beating heart, apprehensive that the interposition of Mrs. Rayland would prevent Orlando from making even the slight apology which General Tracy dictated; and
seeing

seeing him restless, and meditating how to escape, he hastily bade Mrs. Rayland good morning; and ordering, in a more peremptory voice than he generally assumed, Orlando to follow him, he left the room; and, as soon as he was alone with his son, put into his hands the letter he had received, at the same time telling him that he must be obeyed in the command he laid upon him, to make immediately the concession required.

Orlando, convinced that he ought to do so, after the appeal he had himself consented to make to the General, assured his father of his obedience. They found, on enquiry, that General Tracy's servant had been sent first to West Wolverton; from whence Mrs. Somerive had, in the most terrifying state of suspense, hastened him to Rayland Hall, where he now waited. Orlando therefore attended his father into his own room; where being furnished with pen and ink, Mr. Somerive wrote to the General in those terms that appeared requisite, and to which Orlando did not object.

The

The letter was then instantly dispatched by the servant: and thus ended an affair which had so much disturbed the peace of the Somerive family, and threatened consequences still more painful. Somerive now ordered his son to return to Mrs. Rayland, shew her the General's letter, and inform her that the business was ended as much to his honour, as her highest notions of what was due to a descendant of Sir Hilderbrand (whose blood was less alloyed than that of the rest of his family) could exact. Somerive said this with some degree of asperity; for, though pleased with the partiality of Mrs. Rayland for Orlando he could not but feel the contempt she expressed towards himself. He told Orlando he expected him to dinner, and then returned home; his mind relieved from an intolerable load; and his heart swelling with gratitude towards his excellent friend General Tracy.

C H A P. III.

EVERY one of the party who met at dinner, at Mr. Somerive's, were ready to worship the General, except Orlando, who still felt himself dissatisfied, and much disposed to enquire by what conversation an accommodation had been so easily brought about. This enquiry, however, he, at his father's request, forbore to make, and the General was perfectly satisfied with the gratitude expressed by the rest of the family ; and in the distant, but polite behaviour of Orlando, saw, what confirmed him in his original idea, that it would be much better if he was out of the way.— The charms of Isabella had now such an ascendancy in the General's imagination, that he determined nothing should impede his designs ; and he believed that the straitened circumstances

circumstances of Somerive, of which he was no longer ignorant, would give him the means of obtaining his daughter.

Somerive had indeed communicated to him, as a friend, the uneasy situation of his affairs, and deplored the conduct of his eldest son. At their next conference therefore alone, Tracy contrived, without forcing the conversation, to bring it round to that point; and when Somerive spoke of the distress which arose from the misconduct of his son Philip, the General took occasion to say, "It is indeed, my friend, a circumstance extremely to be lamented—and, in my opinion, renders the situation of your youngest son much more critical.—I heartily wish he was in some profession. Have you considered what I said to you about the army?—I believe I could be of very material service to you in that line."

"Dear General," exclaimed Somerive, "how much I feel myself indebted to you! Yes, I certainly have thought of it; and the result of my reflections is, that if his mother

mother consented, if Mrs. Rayland did not object——”

“ My good friend,” interrupted the General, “ can a man of your understanding, when the well-doing of such a son is in question, think that these *ifs* should have any weight ?—Mrs. Somerive, all tender as she is, has too much sense to indulge her fondness at the expence of her son’s establishment ; and as to Mrs. Rayland—I have not indeed the honour to know her—but the only question seems to be, will she, or will she not, provide for Orlando ?—*If* she will, why will she not say so ?—If she will not, are not you doing your son an irreparable injury, in suffering him to waste in fruitless expectation the best of his days ?”

“ It is very difficult,” replied Mr. Somerive, after musing a moment, “ very difficult to know how to act : Mrs. Rayland has a temper so peculiar, that if she is once offended, it is for ever. Perhaps, however, since I see she piques herself on the military honours of her family, perhaps she may not be displeased at Orlando’s entering
on

on the profession of arms. She seemed much more eager to promote than to check his ardour in this affair with Sir John Belgrave : and as the British nation is now engaged in a quarrel with people whom she considers as the descendants of the Regicides, against whom her ancestors drew their swords, it is not, I think, very unlikely that she might approve of her young favourite's making his first essay in arms against those whom she terms the Rebels of America."

"As to that," answered the General coldly, "it may be very well, in starting the idea, to give her that notion; but in fact this campaign will end the unworthy contest.—Of this I have the most positive assurances from my military friends on the spot, as well as the firmest reliance on the measures adopted by ministers; and I am convinced that those wretched, ragged fellows, without discipline, money, clothes, or arms, will be unable longer to struggle for their chimerical liberty. Probably they are by this time crushed; and therefore as

no more troops will be sent out, your son will not, if you adopt this plan, be separated from his family, and may still occasionally visit this capricious old gentlewoman, who, unless she differs much from the rest of her sex, of all ages and descriptions, will not like a handsome young fellow the less for having a cockade in his hat."

"Ah, General!" returned Somerville smiling, "I fancy your own experience among the women well justifies that remark. Since you really are so sure that Orlando would not be sent abroad, which will make a great difference certainly in his mother's feelings on this point, and perhaps in those of Mrs. Rayland, I will take an immediate opportunity of speaking of it to my wife, and we will consider of the safest method of taking Mrs. Rayland's opinion upon it. As to Orlando himself, there can be little doubt of his concurrence;—at least I hope not. And there are other reasons, my friend, besides those that I have named to you, why his present situation is utterly improper; and why it

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seems to me that he cannot too soon be removed from it."

Mr. Somerive, in speaking thus, was thinking of Monimia, who, ever since he had first heard her described, had occurred to him continually. The necessity there was for attending immediately to the affair of the threatened duel, had hitherto prevented his speaking of her to Orlando; in that serious manner which he thought the affair merited: but he had repeatedly touched on it; and finding Orlando shrink from the investigation, he laid in wait for an occasion to probe him more deeply—an occasion which, perceiving his father sought it, Orlando as solicitously endeavoured to avoid giving him, by contriving to be always busied in attending on his sisters or his mother; but while he thus got out of the way of his father, he was very much in that of the General, who could hardly ever get an opportunity of whispering to Isabella those sentiments which daily acquired new force. For, the week following that when the affair with Sir John Belgrave was

was settled, Orlando could find no excuse for returning to Rayland Hall of a night : he was therefore reduced to the necessity of going thither after his own family were in bed ; and as the way through the chapel was not open to him, he could only see Monimia in her own room, and their meetings were therefore very short, and so hāzardous, that the impatience and discontent of Orlando could no longer be repressed or concealed.

The greater his attachment to Monimia became (and every hour it seemed to gather strength), the more terrible appeared her situation, and his own. They were both so young that he thought he might easily obtain an establishment, and that the noon of their lives might pass in felicity together, were he, instead of remaining in a state of uncertain dependence, to be allowed to go forth into the world. Sanguine and romantic in the extreme, and feeling within himself talents which he was denied the power of exercising, his mind expatiated on visionary prospects, which he believed might easily

be realized. When to provide for passing his life with Monimia was in question, every thing seemed possible ; and as he heard much of the rapid fortunes made in India, and had never considered, or perhaps heard of the means by which they were acquired, he fancied that an appointment there would put him in the high road to happiness ; and various were the projects of this and of many other kinds, on which his thoughts continually dwelt.

General Tracy, who had long read mankind, easily penetrated into the mind of a man so new to the world as Orlando ; and though he saw that his young friend did not greatly esteem him, he was not by that observation deterred from conciliating as much as possible his good opinion, till at length Orlando communicated his discontent at being at his time of life so inactive and useless ; and the General, having brought him to that confession, started the scheme he had before proposed only to his father, of procuring him a commission, and lending him all the interest which he was
• known

known to possess, to promote his fortune in the army.

A proposal so friendly, and so much adapted to the warm and ardent temper of Orlando, was acknowledged with gratitude, and without farther consideration embraced, on condition that his family did not oppose it. The General told him, that it was in consequence of his father's apparent inclinations that he had at first thought of it ; that his mother had certainly too much sense to reject such an advantageous offer for him ; " especially," added he, " as from the present state of the war, there is not the least likelihood of your being sent abroad. — You know best, however, my dear Sir," continued the General, with something on his countenance between a smile and a sneer — " you know best how far your campaigns against the game on the Rayland manors may answer better than the services of a soldier, or whether the old lady's hands can bestow a more fruitful prize than the barren laurels you may gather in bearing arms for your country."

There was in this speech something that conveyed to Orlando an idea that he was despised ; and that there was meanness in his attending on Mrs. Rayland like a legacy hunter—of all characters the most despicable. The blood that rushed into his cheeks, spoke the painful sensations this impression brought with it. He could not, however, express them with propriety to a man whose only purpose seemed to be that of befriending him, by rousing him from indolence, and even from a species of servitude. The General saw that what he said had the effect he wished ; and Orlando left him, determined to avail himself of the opportunity that now offered for obtaining what he believed would be a degree of independence. He began to consider how he might prevail on Mrs. Rayland to assist, instead of opposing this scheme ; and how he might thus obtain a certain portion of liberty, without offending one to whom gratitude and interest contributed to attach him. A deep and painful sigh, raised by the reflection of the misery of parting from

Monimia, followed the resolution he adopted ; but he recollected that by no other means he could remove the cruel obstacles between them, and that resolution became confirmed.

He had not yet, however, the courage to communicate to her the probability there was that they must soon part. Their short conferences, in every one of which they incurred the hazard of discovery, passed, on her side, in mournful presentiments of future sorrow, which she yet endeavoured to conceal ; and on his, in trying, now to console her, and now in acknowledging that there was but too much cause for her fears : projects were considered, however, for their future meetings with less risk. She told him, that during the time he was so much at home, her aunt confined her less strictly through the day : that in proportion as she found herself become more necessary to Mrs. Rayland, and more secure of a great provision after her death, Mrs. Lennard became more indolent, and more addicted to her own gratifications. Betty, who was a

very great favourite, had little else to do than to wait upon her; an employment in which Monimia herself was often engaged, though she was now more usually employed about the person of Mrs. Rayland, who found her so tender and attentive that she began to look upon her with some degree of complacency. This task, while it added a heavy link to her letters, she yet went through, not only with patience, but with pleasure; for she hoped that by making herself useful to Mrs. Rayland, she might not only have more frequent opportunities of seeing Orlando during the winter, which she imagined he would pass at the Hall, but perhaps obtain from her such a share of recollection at her death, as might remove the necessity of an entire dependence on Mrs. Lennard; a dependence which some late observations had made her believe as precarious as she felt it to be painful.

In consequence of General Tracy's visit to Sir John Belgrave at the house of Mr. Stockton, he received from the master of it an invitation, which he accepted; Mr.
Stockton

Stockton first waiting upon him at West Wolverton—Sir John, and Philip Some-
 rive, with several others of the late visitants
 at the Castle, were gone into Scotland on a
 shooting party; but Mr. Stockton had a
 succession of visitors.—His magnificent
 style of living, which it was known he
 had a fortune to support, attracted not
 only all his London friends by turns to his
 house, but from every part of the country
 acquaintance poured in upon him; ac-
 quaintance who desired nothing better, in
 the way of entertainment, than his French
 cook and his well-furnished cellars af-
 forded them.—The Clergy were his very
 constant guests; and he loved to have two
 or three of them always about him, at
 whom he might lanch those shafts of wit
 which he had picked up here and there,
 and which consisted of common-place jokes
 upon religion; well knowing, that with
 these select few (orthodox as they were), the
 excellence of the entertainment he gave
 them secured their silence and complaisance.

The General, who was in manners really

a man of fashion, was by no means delighted with the gross and noisy society he found at Stockton's : but he saw that if he would escape suspicion, he must not make his visit at Somerive's too long ; and, therefore, was glad to be assured that there was an house in the immediate neighbourhood, where he might remain a fortnight or three weeks, after prudence dictated his departure from that of Mr. Somerive ; which he now feared must happen before his hopes with Isabella were successful, for he found it much more difficult to obtain any degree of favour, than his own vanity and her giddiness had at first led him to suppose.

Isabella Somerive was not naturally a coquette : but she had a greater flow of spirits than any of her family, except her elder brother, whom she greatly resembled in the thoughtless vivacity of his disposition ; from her sex and education, what was in him attended with dangerous errors, was in her only wild but innocent gaiety, becoming enough to youth, health and beauty. Of that beauty she had early learned the value :
she

THE OLD MANOR HOUSE.

she had heard it praised at home, and found her father and mother were pleased to hear of it. But during her short stay in London she had been intoxicated with the incense that was offered her; and, notwithstanding the good humour inherent in her disposition, she failed not to enjoy, with some degree of feminine triumph, the preference that was given her over her cousins, whose admirers seemed all disposed to desert them on the first appearance of this rustic beauty; and she felt, too, the pleasure of retaliation for all the airs of consequence which the Miss Woodfords had assumed in their visits to West Wolverton, from their superior knowledge of fashions, public places, and great people. But, above all, Isabella was delighted by the preference given her by a judge so discerning as General Tracy—whose taste in beauty was so universally allowed, that his admiration had given eminence to several pretty women, who would never otherwise have been noticed. Far however from thinking of him as a lover, Isabella, who was, with all her



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vivacity, as innocent as little Emma herself, considered him merely as her father's friend, and would have applied to him for advice, in as much expectation of receiving it with disinterested wisdom, as to her father himself. The fine speeches he took every opportunity of making, she believed partly arose from habit, and were partly proofs of his admiration; which she thought perfectly harmless, though it sometimes struck her as ridiculous. And in conversation with her sisters, and sometimes with her mother, she laughingly called the General—her old beau—her venerable admirer, and said she wished he was thirty years younger. Mrs. Somerive sometimes checked her; but oftener smiled at the description she gave of the General's solemn gallantry, and of the trouble she knew his toilet cost him; “which really,” cried she, “grieves one's very heart. Poor man! it must be excessively fatiguing; and after all, I think he would be a thousand times more agreeable, if he could be persuaded to appear as my father and other men do, of the same

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same age.—Instead of putting on toupées and curls, which it requires so much art and time to make fit snug and look natural, how preferable would a good comfortable wig be to his poor old head ! which I am sure must ache sadly every day, before Beaumielle has patched up the gaps that time has made!—and, besides, I know he is always in fear of some of this borrowed ~~che~~velure's coming off, and disgracing him ; I have absolutely seen him nervous about it.”—“ Dear Isabella,” said Mrs. Somerive, who was present at this description, “ how you run on ! The General, I dare say, has no false hair ; and if he has, how does it materially differ from a wig !”

“ Oh mamma !” replied her daughter, “ I believe it differs so much in the General's opinion, that he had rather have his head cut off than his hair. A wig ! I have seen him shudder at the idea.”

“ You have seen him !” said Mrs. Somerive : “ pray when ?”

“ The other day, when he rode out with us. There was a terrible high wind, and
I knew



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I knew the ancient beau would be ten times more discomposed by it than we were—So, as soon as we got upon the downs, I set off with a brisk canter directly against it ; and the poor dear General was obliged, you know, to follow us.”—

“ Well ?”

“ Well—and so he buttoned up the cape of his great coat round his ears, and set off after us ; but as ill fortune would have it, this cape, I suppose, loosened the strings of his curls, and the wind blew so unmercifully that he did not hear of their defection from his ears ; but as he came gallopping up to me and Selina, who were a good way before him, these ill behaved curls deserted, and were flying, like two small birds tied by the leg, half a yard behind him ; and if he had been commander of a town suddenly blown up by the enemy, he could not have looked more amazed and dismayed, than he did when I called out to him—General ! General ! your curls are flying away !—He put up his hand to his two ears alternately,

. and

and finding it too true that these cowardly curls had left their post, and were retained only by a bit of black twist, he gave them a twitch, and thrust them into his pocket—while he said most dolorously, “ Ever since that fever I got last year by overheating myself walking with the King at Windsor, I have lost my hair in some degree; and till it is restored I am under the necessity of wearing these awkward contrivances.”

“ Dear General,” said I, as if I pitied his distress, “ I am afraid you will catch cold without them. Had you not better wrap a handkerchief about your head? I am sure you must feel a difference.—I am in pain for you!—It is, indeed, an awkward contrivance; and I should think you would find more comfortable and certain accommodation in a wig.”

“ A wig!” exclaimed he—“ a military man in a wig!—like a turtle-eating cit, or a Stock-Exchange broker!—Impossible!—No! lovely Isabella, you can never suppose I ought to make myself such a figure; and I assure you I have, when not
hurt

hurt by illness, a very tolerable head of hair."

"For your time of life, General!" said I,—This completed the poor good man's dismay; and he set about assuring me, that the military hardships he had gone through in the younger part of his life, and perhaps a little irregularity since, made him look at least fifteen years older than he was, and so went on making such fine speeches as he thinks becoming in so *young* a man.

"Upon my word, Isabella," remarked Mrs. Somerive, "you will offend the General by all this flippancy; and your father, I assure you, would not be at all pleased if you should."

"No, indeed, my dear mamma!" answered she, "there is no danger of my offending him. The rattling speeches I make to him, and even my turning him into ridicule when only Selina and I are by, is so far from offending him, that he seems to like it.—Does not he, Selina?"

"It is not right, however, in my opinion," said Selina.

"Why

“Why not, if you please, my Lady Graveairs?”

“Because I do not think a person’s age,” replied Selina, “a proper subject of ridicule.”

“No,” answered Isabella—“not if they do not make it so, by attempting to appear young; but how is it possible to help laughing at a man who fancies that, at sixty, he can pass for six-and-twenty?”

“If it is the General’s foible,” said Mrs. Somerive gravely, “it seems to be the only one; and it makes him happy, and hurts nobody. He is so worthy a man that it is immaterial whether he is sixty or six-and-twenty; and if he has the weakness to prefer being thought the latter, which, however, Isabella you know is not true, he should not be rudely reminded that nobody else thinks so.”

“Well, if this worthy man will flirt with and make love to girls young enough to be his grand-daughters, I must laugh, if it be wrong,” cried Isabella.

“Make

“ Make love !” exclaimed Mrs. Somerive : “ What do you mean, child ?”

“ Why—only, mamma, that if he were a young man, the marvellously fine speeches he studies would seem like love-making speeches. I told him the other day, that since he thought me so very charming a creature, I wished he would persuade his nephew to be of the same opinion, for there would be some sense in that.”

“ His nephew !—Who is his nephew ?” enquired her mother.

“ I never saw him,” replied Isabella ; “ but Eliza Woodford has often, and says he is the most elegant and the handsomest young man about town.”

“ Do you mean,” said Mrs. Somerive, “ the son of his elder brother, Lord Taymouth ?”

“ Oh ! not at all—he is a miserable looking mortal :—No, this nephew, as Eliza tells me, is the only son of his sister, Lady Something Tracy, who married a Mr. Warwick, who, though a gentleman,
her

her family thought was a match so much beneath her, that they never forgave her; and as she and her husband both died early, this young man, who was their only child, and had a very small fortune, was brought up by the General, who means to make him his heir."

"He is a good creature," said Mrs. Somerive; "and every thing I hear increases my esteem for him."

"You would consent then, my dear mamma," replied Isabella, "to my having Captain Warwick?"

"Alas!" answered her mother mournfully, "Captain Warwick, my dear girl, heir to the fortune of General Tracy, will never, I fear, ask my consent. Young women without fortune, though their merit be indisputable, are not likely now to marry at all; very unlikely, indeed, to meet with such high fortune."

"I don't see that at all," cried Isabella. "Selina and Emma may determine to die old maids if they please; but, for my part, I'll try, as long as I am young and good looking,

looking, for a husband ; and as to this Warwick, I am bent upon setting my cap at him without mercy, if his uncle would but give me an opportunity. That he will not do ; for though he is so good to him, and gives him such an handsome allowance, he hardly ever sees him ; and has bought him a company in another regiment, rather than have him in his own, and so he is sent off to America—and——”

“ You have no chance then,” interrupted Mrs. Somerive, “ of trying your power, Isabella ?”

“ No !” cried she ; “ but it is excellent sport to teize his uncle about him, who always avoids talking of him, just like a coquettish Mamina, who hates to hear that Miss is tall and handsome.”

Mrs. Somerive, again gently reproving her daughter for speaking thus of the General, put an end to the conversation by sending her daughters away to dress for dinner ; while she meditated alone on what her husband had that morning said to her on the subject of Orlando’s entering the
army.

army. He had now, for the first time, explained to her all the reasons he had for wishing his son removed from Rayland Hall; and had communicated the principal of these, his suspicions of an attachment to Monimia. Mrs. Somerive felt all the truth of what her husband urged in favour of this plan; and, particularly uneasy at the information he had given her about Monimia, she now tried to reason herself out of those fears for his personal safety, which yet led her to wish he might remain, on whatever terms, near her and his family.

C H A P. IV.

THE family of Somerive was almost the only one in the country, or at least within five and twenty miles, who had not waited on Mr. Stockton after his purchasing the estates of Lord Carloraine. For this Mr. Somerive had several reasons. Though he disdained any mean compliances with the caprices of Mrs. Rayland, he thought it wrong to connect himself with a man who, on his first appearance in the country, had offended her unhandsomely enough; and he knew it would not only be impolitic in regard to her, but to the economy of his own family. His servants, plain and laborious, were at present content with their portion of work and of wages; but were they once introduced into such a servants hall as that of the Castle, where the same profusion reigned as was customary

mary in the parlour, he knew they would immediately become discontented, and of course troublesome and useless. The people whom he found were generally assembled at the Castle, most of them young men, celebrated for their dissolute manners, were not such as he wished to have introduced to his daughters. And these causes co-operating to make him wish to avoid every acquaintance with Mr. Stockton, he had taken some pains to prevail on his eldest son to avoid it also ; but Philip Somerive, who had some slight knowledge of Stockton in London, hastened, in spite of his father's remonstrances, to renew and strengthen it as soon as he settled in the neighbourhood, and was very soon more at Stockton's than at home. The simple economy of his father's house appeared to him a total deprivation of all that a gentleman ought to enjoy ; and when contrasted with the voluptuous epicurism that reigned in the splendid mansion of his new friend, he had not the courage to return to it oftener than

want

want of money compelled him to do : and he forgot that to these temporary gratifications he was sacrificing the peace of his father, his mother, and his sisters ; and laying up for himself all the miseries of indigence, and all the meannesses of dependence.

- • It was here he confirmed, by indulgence, that passion for play which he had acquired at college. The party at Carloraine Castle passed whole nights in gaming, where young Somerive often lost, but, alas ! sometimes won ; and in the triumph of his success, the pain and inconvenience of his ill fortune was forgotten. He learned some of those modes of ascertaining the matter, which he saw so happily practised by others ; and, after some time, became, in some measure, one of the initiated, and had, in consequence seldom occasion to apply to his father for money—therefore he seldom went near him : sometimes whole months therefore passed, during which his family never saw him, though they knew that much of his
- his

his time was passed with Mr. Stockton, whom this circumstance contributed to render odious to Mr. Somerive.

After the acquaintance, however, commenced between Stockton and the General, Somerive found it very difficult to keep the same distance; and Stockton, who had a great inclination to see Somerive's hand; some daughters, of whom he had heard so much, was so importunately civil, while General Tracy, on the other hand, promoted the acquaintance so warmly, that Somerive and Orlando engaged to dine with Stockton on one of those days when he had invited half the county. The latter went with extreme reluctance; not only because what he had heard of the man himself, and of the people who surrounded him, gave no favourable idea of the society; but because he thought it wrong to hazard offending Mrs. Rayland, in a point which, to pursue, afforded no pleasure either to his father or himself. Neither of these reasons for denial, however, could be urged to the General, who he thought al-

ready despised him for his assiduity about the old lady; and as his father had been induced to consent, Orlando could not refuse to accompany him.

The table was furnished with all that modern luxury has invented, or money could purchase: the greatest variety of expensive wines, and a superb dessert, finished a repast, at which were collected a group as various as their entertainment, though not so well chosen. The beginning of the dinner was passed in that sort of talk which relates solely to eating: when that exercise relaxed, something like an attempt at conversation was made. The last news from America was discussed; but as they all agreed in one sentiment—that the rebellious colonists ought to be extirpated—there was no room for argument, and the discourse soon languished; and then again revived on topics nearer home—game, poachers, and turnpikes: the wine had by that time circulated enough to give their conversation, if conversation it might be called, another turn. They grew noisy and offensive; and

Orlando, who was never before among such a set of people, nor had ever in his life heard such language, was unable to conceal his disgust, though he only shewed it by silence, and by passing from him the bottle which he saw had so affected the little understanding that the majority of the company had possessed.

This was at length perceived by Mr. Stockton, who, accustomed to indulge himself in what he fancied shrewd sayings, and to expect that every man not so rich as himself should submit to be his butt, began to attack Orlando on the score of his being a milk-sop, and living always in the lap of the old lady at the Hall.—To this Orlando answered with good humour, perfectly indifferent what such a man as Stockton thought of him; but the latter seeing how well he bore this first attack, could not resist the temptation of pursuing his blow.

“Why, damn it now!” cried he, “we know very well, Sir Rowland (that was the name which Philip Somerive gave to his brother in derision), we know very well that

you are no more of a saint than your neighbours ; and that though you are in waiting on an old woman all day, you makes yourself amends at night with a young one—aye, and a devilish pretty wench she is too as ever I saw.—Egad ! Belgrave was half mad about her for a week, and had a mind to have stormed the tower where this dulcinea lives, notwithstanding its being guarded by the fierce Sir Rowland.—I don't know her name.—Tell me, Sir Knight, how is your goddess called ? and by the Lord we'll drink her health in a bumper !”

Mr. Somerive, who saw in the changes of Orlando's expressive countenance, that his answer would inevitably bring on another quarrel, arose hastily, and, addressing himself to Mr. Stockton, while he commanded Orlando to be silent, he said, “ After what passed, Mr. Stockton, in regard to Sir John Belgrave and my son, this mention of the affair can only be considered as an insult to us both. If that be your purpose, some other place than your own house should have been found for it. We will now quit it, in order

order to give you an opportunity of pursuing your design, without adding the breach of the laws of hospitality to those of decency and good manners."

Somerive then taking Orlando by the arm, insisted on his going with him; while the General; and some other men in the room, who were yet in possession of their senses, got round Stockton, who was very drunk, and represented how wrong it was to renew the conversation on Sir John Belgrave; an affair which had been settled with so much difficulty, and had threatened such serious consequences. The profession, birth, and riches of General Tracy, gave him great authority in the opinion of even the wealthy and insolent Stockton himself; and as he loved his ease, even beyond the indulgence of his purse-proud arrogance, he saw at once, that in gratifying the one, he had, more than he intended, risked the other. He therefore sent one of his dependents to apologize to the two Somerives, who had already left the room: General Tracy too went to assure them of

Stockton's concern for what had passed; excused it by alledging his inebriety, and declared that he should think both Mr. Somerive and his son wrong to take any further notice of the idle words of a man who was himself convinced of their impropriety. "We will talk of all this at our leisure, dear General," replied the elder Somerive: "at present you must allow me to take Orlando from an house, into which I am heartily concerned that either of us ever entered."

"I will go with you, my dear friend," cried the General; "but first allow me to return to poor Stockton, who is extremely concerned for what has happened, and to tell him——"

"Any thing you please from yourself, Sir," said Orlando interrupting him; "but nothing from me, unless it be——"

"Leave the matter to *me*, Orlando," cried Somerive sternly. "You know, General," added he, addressing himself to his friend, "how little it can be my wish to have this ridiculous matter go any farther; but as
I never

"I never yet bore a premeditated insult myself, so I will not ask Orlando to do it, be the consequences what they may."

"Good God!" exclaimed the General, "this was no premeditated insult; it was merely the folly of a man in a condition which disarms resentment, even from those of the most quick feelings."

"He must tell me so himself, then," said Orlando.

"I will undertake that he shall," answered the General; "and so you leave the house satisfied, I hope?"

To this the elder Somerive answered drily: "Blessed are the peacemakers, my good General!" and then, leaving him to return, if he pleased, to his new friends, he mounted his horse, which, with that of Orlando's, his servants had brought to the door, and they proceeded homeward together.

This was the opportunity of speaking to Orlando, that his father had been some days watching for; and the scene that had just passed, awakening all his fears about

Monimia, was an additional motive to him, not to neglect it.

Orlando, whose heart was bursting with indignation at the insult offered to her name, rode silently by his side, expecting, with a mixture of concern and confusion, that his father would again press him on his attachment. He was studying, without being able to determine, how he should answer. He had never been guilty of a falsehood; and could he now reconcile himself to the meanness of attempting one, he believed it would be fruitless; yet, to betray the tender, trusting, timid Monimia—to acknowledge their clandestine meetings, which his father might not be persuaded were innocent—and to render himself liable to be forbidden ever again to see her—how was it possible to determine on risking it, by an avowal of the truth? There was not much time for this painful debate. Mr. Somerive put his horse into a walk, and then said, in that grave and earnest manner which always affected his son—

“ You see, Orlando, all the mischief to
which

which this boyish and indiscreet love of yours has exposed, not only yourself, but the young woman who is, unluckily for her, the object of it."

"Love, Sir!" said Orlando, not knowing very well what to say.

"Nay, Sir," cried Somerive more sternly, "don't affect ignorance; you have been playing the fool with that young girl that Lennard passes for her niece. Answer me honestly—have you not?"

"No, Sir—never."

"Have a care, young man—I can pardon the follies of youth, but premeditated falsehood I never will forgive."

"Be so good then, my dear father, to explain precisely your meaning; and when I perfectly understand the charge, I will answer it as truly as if I were on oath."

"The girl is handsome?" said Somerive.

"Certainly," answered Orlando.

"And you have informed her of it, no doubt?"

"Pardon me, Sir, I never have; and I

believe she is at this moment unconscious of it."

"Really! that is wonderful.—She is employed, I think, in the house as a kind of under housekeeper."

"No, Sir; but she sometimes undertakes part of her aunt's business when she is engaged or indisposed, and sometimes attends Mrs. Rayland."

"And lives, I suppose, as Lennard does, in the parlour with the Lady?"

"Very rarely, Sir, and as a matter of great favour, she dines there; rather oftener, though still not regularly, is allowed to drink tea in the parlour."

"Humph!—and at other times, I suppose, she takes her seat at the table allowed Snelcraft and Pattenfon: the latter worthy man is celebrated, I think, for his various and successful amours under the roof of my very pious kinswoman. This poor girl, I suppose, is in the way of adding to the trophies of that excellent and faithful servant. Upon my word, Orlando, you

you may find him a very formidable rival." 7

"Gracious Heaven, Sir!" cried Orlando, who could not bear even the supposition, "what mistaken notions you have formed of Monimia!"

"Monimia!" exclaimed Somerive, who, serious as the matter was, could not help smiling: "Monimia!—why thou art far gone, my poor boy, since thou hast found such a name for thy nymph—Monimia! I must be allowed, since we are talking plainly of the matter, to call her Mary."

"You may call her what you please, Sir," replied Orlando very impatiently, "so as you do justice to her innocence and goodness. Suffer me to speak, Sir," added he, finding his father about to interrupt him—"suffer me to declare to you, that not one of your own daughters, my sisters, whom I so tenderly love, are more innocent, or more worthy of respect and esteem, and, let me add, of admiration, than this young woman."

• "Indeed! is that your opinion?—Pray,

Orlando, what means have you had of being so well informed of all these perfections, which you are so willing to put in comparison with those of your own family?"

"Continual experience, amounting to perfect conviction."

"Truly that is marvellous, considering this young person, according to your own account a servant, so seldom drinks tea, and so much seldomer dines with Mrs. Rayland, where, I suppose, she is not allowed any great share of the conversation, even when she is admitted;—though you are willing to put her on a level with your sisters, I suppose you hardly so practised this levelling principle on yourself, as to pursue your studies of this miracle to the table of the great Snelcraft, and greater Pattenfon."

"No, Sir," retorted Orlando warmly; "nor does Monimia ever sit at that table."

"May I then ask, without offending this lady, whose nom de guerre is I find settled to be Monimia—where you have seen

seen enough of her to form a judgment so much in her favour?"

"That may be done by seeing her once. You, yourself, my dear father!" added Orlando extremely moved, "if you were once to see her, ~~you would not~~ blame me for what I have said. Indeed you would not: you would own that she is all I have described."

"Poor boy!" cried Mr. Somerive with a deep sigh; "at your age I remember thinking just the same of a very handsome girl. I too have had my Monimia! my Celinda, my Leonora; and many were the heart-aches these beauties gave me. I should, therefore," continued he, in a more solemn tone—"I should, therefore, my dear Orlando! pass over this juvenile passion, and not even enquire about it, if, from the peculiarity of your situation, and that of the young woman, as well as from your tendency to romantic quixotism, which perhaps I have too much encouraged, I did not fear that it may end more seriously. She is very pretty! and you are
very

very young, and very much in love!—If she is innocent——”

“If!—Good God, Sir, what shall I say to convince you of it?”

“Nothing, Orlando; speak simply the truth, and I will attend ~~you~~; allow me to finish the sentence—If she is innocent and amiable, as you *believe* her to be, you would not certainly destroy that innocence? you would not render her unamiable?”

“Not for a million of worlds!” cried Orlando eagerly.

“Well, then, Orlando, in order to reconcile your honour with that love which it seems you do not affect to deny, it follows that you would marry her?”

“Most undoubtedly, Sir, I would.”

“To throw yourself out for ever from every hope of favour on the part of Mrs. Rayland; and, while you render your own family miserable, to entail poverty for life on the woman you love, and her children?”

“I know it all but too well: permit me, however, Sir, to say, that as to my family,

I do.

“I do not see why they should make themselves miserable about it, since the morals, the manners, the person of my wife, could be no disgrace to them; and if I chose to work for her, surely I have a right to live with whom I please.”

“To work!” cried Somerive angrily. “How work?—you who are in no profession, and could not even support yourself?”

“Pardon me, Sir,” answered Orlando, “and let it not offend you, if I say, that a young man of almost one and twenty, six feet high, and in perfect health, must be a very contemptible wretch, indeed, if he is unable to obtain a provision for himself, and to provide for his wife.”

“Wild and ridiculous!” exclaimed Somerive. “If you were twelve feet high, and had as many hands as Briareus, how could you employ them? you who have been brought up to nothing, who know nothing——”

“That, Sir, is my misfortune—surely not my fault.”

• “I allow it. It is a misfortune to which
I see

I see other misfortunes are annexed, if remedy be not instantly-found. I perceive, Orlando, that this matter, on which it is plain you have thought deeply, is likely to be even more serious than I apprehended. I must find a profession for you, which shall take you out of a situation so hazardous. I understood General Tracy, that if a commission could be obtained, you expressed no disinclination to enter the army?"

"Certainly I do not.—And let my readiness, or rather my eagerness to embrace that offer convince you, Sir, that whatever may be my future hopes, I do not mean to involve Monimia in my present difficulties, nor to aspire to happiness till I have earned it. Put me, Sir, instantly to the proof. Procure for me a commission, or send me out a volunteer. You shall not find me shrink from any task you may impose upon me. But, in return, I expect not to be compelled to resign the hope that will alone animate me—I love Monimia passionately; I shall always love her; and I will not promise to resign her for ever."

"I shall

“ I shall leave all that to time and absence,” answered Somerive; “ and insist on nothing but that you will join with me in prevailing on Mrs. Rayland to hear of your entering into the army without dissatisfaction. Though ~~and~~ with you to have the means of being in some degree independent, it were folly to forfeit needlessly your expectations from her. Try, therefore, to manage this as to obtain her consent.”

“ Mrs. Rayland will not, I really believe, oppose it,” said Orlando.

“ Try her,” answered his father; “ on your sincerity in doing so I shall rely: and remember Orlando, that if from any other artful quarter attempts are made to persuade her against consenting to this plan, I have only to inform her of your curious plan of marrying her housekeeper’s niece, and put her upon enquiring into the intrigue you are carrying on, and you would be banished for ever from Rayland Hall.”

“ There would be as little wisdom in that, Sir,” said Orlando with great warmth, “ as there is truth in imputing an intrigue

“or art to Monimia. However, you are to do as you please.”

“And you, Sir,” retorted Somerive warmly, “seem to think yourself authorised to say what you please.—Let not my indulgence, which has ruined your brother, and now I see is likely to be your destruction; let not my indulgence hitherto, lead you to depend too much upon it. You shall find, Sir, that if you are ungrateful and undutiful, I can be harsh, and can make myself obeyed. But here, for the present, I desire to end the discourse. We are near home, and I will not have your mother made uneasy, either by the report of what happened to-day at dinner, or by any knowledge of your folly, which has not yet reached her. I shall go immediately to my study; and I recommend it to you to go to your own room, and not appear to-night; for your mother, you know well, is so accustomed to penetrate into my thoughts and yours, that she will not fail to perceive that something is wrong—and she shall not be rendered unhappy.”

Orlando,

Orlando, most willing to obey his father in this respect, made no other answer than wishing him a good night; and as soon as he dismounted at home, he retired to his own room, and, with mingled sensations of resentment and sorrow, of anger and despondency, began to reflect on what had passed during the day. The insolent language used by Stockton stung him to the soul. He saw too evidently, that his nightly meetings with Monimia were suspected, if not known—known to the unprincipled and profligate Stockton, who had put the most odious construction on the conduct of the innocent Monimia. Yet he was compelled also to allow, that whatever might be the suspicions or opinions concerning her, he could not avenge or defend her, without being too well assured that consequences must ensue still more fatal to her. If their intercourse was once suspected by Mrs. Rayland, he knew that Monimia would be dismissed with disgrace; that she would probably be abandoned by her aunt, and thrown upon the world, where he had not

not the power of protecting her from poverty, though he might guard her from insult. The only comfort he had was, that his father, when his interrogatories seemed most hardly to press him to declare how and where he met Monimia, had been diverted to other discourse; that he had, therefore, not been reduced either to tell him a falsehood, or to betray the secret of the door which admitted him to the turret; a secret of which he yet hoped to avail himself, in the interval that must occur between the time of his returning to the Hall and his departure for the army, which he now saw was certain. He felt no wish more ardent than that of reconciling his Monimia to his going, exchanging with her mutual vows of eternal affection, and setting forth in the certainty of her remaining under the protection of Mrs. Lennard, and in the hope that he should return in a situation that might enable him to ask her hand, and to render her subsequent life as happy as the fondest love and competent fortune could make it. But Orlando saw too plainly,

ly.

ly, that if his evening conferences were known to his father, he would, at whatever risk of ruining him for ever with Mrs. Rayland, put an end to them; and therefore, as more caution than ever was requisite, he determined, for one night, to refrain from the short and dangerous indulgence he had snatched by travelling from Wolverton to the Hall in the middle of the night; and, though Monimia expected him, to forbear seeing her till the next evening, when he hoped to have arranged in his mind what it was the most necessary to say, to make her submit with composure to their separation. Then too he hoped to know something certain of this commission, of which the General hourly expected intelligence from London; and that he should not, by speaking with uncertainty, add suspense to the other uneasy sensations he must inflict on Monimia. He flattered himself also, that he should hear of the General's having fixed the day of his departure. He had now been a fortnight at West Wolverton; and though his stay seemed, the more it was

was

was prolonged, to yield to the rest of the family increased satisfaction, Orlando, whom it detained from the Hall, began to think it the most tedious and unconscionable visit that ever one friend paid to another; and, far from suspecting the real motive, thought with astonishment on General Tracy's living so long among people so unlike his usual associates, and so much out of his way.

C H A P. V.

TO reconcile Monimia to his departure, to hide from her the anguish of his own heart at the knowledge that he must go, were no light tasks to Orlando: they were such as all his courage, all his sense of propriety, were nearly unequal to. What would become of her when he was gone? From his earliest remembrance, the certainty of seeing Monimia at the Hall had constituted his principal happiness: yet *he* had many other amusements abroad; he had many relations whom he loved, and who tenderly loved him; he had several pursuits to engage his mind, and several amusements to occupy his time.--Monimia! alas! what had Monimia? Almost alone in the world, *she* had no connection but her aunt, whose reluctant kindness and cold

cold friendship answered but ill to the affectionate temper of the lovely girl, who would have been attached to her, all repulsive as her manners were, from gratitude, and because she believed her the only relation, if Mrs. Lennard had given her leave. — But, selfish, narrow-minded, and overbearing, it was impossible for Monimia to love her; and she once remarked, when she stole for five minutes (while her aunt attended Mrs. Rayland to a morning visit) into the garden with Orlando, that she resembled a passion-flower, that having once been supported by a sort of espalier, the wood had decayed, and, nothing being put in its place, the plant crept along the ground, withering, from the dampness to which it was exposed. “See,” cried Monimia, “this plant resembles me! It seems abandoned to its fate.” Orlando remembered what he then said to drive from her mind such gloomy ideas; but now they were about to be verified. If Monimia was to him all that hitherto sweetened his existence, he was at least as necessary to

hers; and a thousand painful fears assailed his heart, as to what she must feel at parting, and what would be her fate when he was gone.

No overture on the affair of his accepting a commission had yet been made to Mrs. Rayland. Mr. Somerive wished Orlando to manage it himself.—Orlando, conscious that much depended upon it, and unwilling to take any decisive step, however necessary, as long as he could avoid it, had still put it off from hour to hour; saying, what was indeed true, that he was now so seldom at the Hall at hours when it was proper to speak of business, that he had found no opportunity. •

The next day, however, but one after the dinner at Stockton's, the family were much surprised by the unexpected return of Philip Somerive; who, arriving late in the evening, told his father and mother that he was come, with their permission, to pass some months at home. Tenderly anxious about him as they all were, and ever flattering themselves that a change of

conduct would restore him to them, his family received him with such expressions as evinced that they were ready to kill the fatted calf: Orlando felt even more pleasure than the rest at his return; and the younger, unlike the elder brother in the parable, murmured not that there was joy and feasting when he who had been lost was found. Yet this did not arise altogether from the disinterested generosity of his nature. He would at any time have rejoiced that his brother's appearance gave comfort to the hearts of his father and his mother: he now doubly rejoiced, because the presence of Philip Somerive at home dismissed Orlando, almost as a matter of course, to the Hall. He had at this time inhabited the apartment set aside for his brother; his own was occupied by the servant of the General, who was too fine a gentleman to be sent into the attic story. West Wolverton house was not a large one; and Orlando, not so well disguising his impatience as he attempted to do, said to his mother as soon as tea was over, that he

he

he knew his stay that night must be attended with some inconveniencies and removals, and therefore he would, with her permission and his father's, go back to the Hall. Mrs. Somerive immediately assented, and said, "And you had better, if your father pleases, set out directly, Orlando, or you will not have your bed aired; and I am sure that little tapestry room where you sleep, as it is on the ground floor, and has windows only to the north, and those windows only long old-fashioned casements, must be horribly damp."

"If you will have the goodness then to say to my father that I am gone, and why gone so early," said Orlando, "it will be better than my disturbing the company with the ceremony of—Good-night!"

To this Mrs. Somerive assenting, Orlando left the room to get his horse; but as he passed through the hall, he met his sister Selina. "Good-night, sweet girl!" said he kissing her hand as he passed her.

"Whither are you going, then, Orlando?" enquired she.

“To the Hall—You know there is no convenient room for me now; and since Philip is come back, I am less wanted.”

At this moment Mr. Somerive passed through the hall, and catching some of these words, he put the same question to Orlando; who answered, “that his mother had agreed to his going to the Hall, to make room for his brother; and promised, Sir, to name it to you,” added he.

Mr. Somerive paused a moment—“To the Hall,” said he, “Orlando! You are in great haste, I see. Surely you might have staid to supper, as you have not seen your brother so long.”

Orlando then gave his mother's reason for his going earlier. “That,” said his father gravely, “is a very good reason for your mother; and *you*, I have no doubt, have some of still greater weight:—but remember, Orlando,” continued he more sternly, “remember I will not be *trifled* with. Go—I wish you a good-night, and as much repose as your *conscience* will let you

you taste when you render your father unhappy !”

Mr. Somerive then passed on ; and Selina, who had hardly ever in her life heard him speak as if half angry to her brother Orlando, remained amazed and trembling, clinging to his arm. “ Good God !” cried she as soon as her father had shut the parlour door, what is all this, my dear brother ? what does my father mean ?”

“ Can you, Selina,” said Orlando in a low and mournful voice—“ can you be very faithful, very guarded on a point where my life depends on secrecy ? Can you, Selina, be secret as the grave, if I trust you ?”

“ Can you doubt it ?” answered the still more alarmed Selina.—“ Well then, to-morrow, perhaps—for to-morrow I must be here again—to-morrow, Selina, if I obtain permission from another person yet more interested than I am, I will perhaps tell you. In the mean time adieu, my dear sister !—If you hear Philip mention me at supper to my father, try to remember what he says.”

Orlando then hastened away, "fearful of being detained; and as the weather was serene, he determined to go on foot, that, if he found all quiet round the apartment of Monimia, he might glide up for a moment to apprise her that they might without interruption meet in his study that evening. There was a late moon, and the night promised to be beautifully clear; he knew therefore that there was little or no hazard of brandy and tea-merchants being abroad: and as to the hint dropt by Stockton, which had at first given him so much pain, he now fancied it was merely the random folly of a drunkard, and that he knew nothing of Monimia but what he might have collected from Philip Somerive after their first unlucky meeting in the woods.

Had he now taken his horse, he must of necessity have made his return known to the stable-servants at the Hall, before he could have a moment's conversation with Monimia: he proceeded therefore quickly on
 foot.

foot, meditating as he went on what had just passed with his father and his sister.

He had often thought of entrusting Selina with the secret of his passion for Monimia. He had often wished they were known to each other. Equally innocent, amiable, and gentle, with a perfect resemblance in temper and in years, he believed that they would fondly love each other; and that if he could see them attached, it would be the happiest circumstance of his life. He hoped too, that the society and the soothing sweetness of Selina would be a resource of comfort to his Monimia when he was far from her. But how he could bring them together, he had yet no idea—Selina being never admitted but on days of ceremony at Rayland Hall; and Monimia being so nearly a prisoner, that the unlucky excursion which occasioned them all so much trouble, was almost the first, and was, in consequence of her stay, which had given so much offence, likely to be the last her aunt would allow her to make. He proposed, however, to consult Monimia.

ing upon it, and consider whether some safe means of their meeting could be found.

Between that gate of the park that lay towards West Wolverton, and the house, there were two paths. The upper one was over an eminence where the park paling enclosed part of the down, under which it spread a verdant bosom, with coppices and tall woods interspersed. The other path, which in winter or in wet seasons was inconvenient, wound down a declivity, where the furze and fern were shaded by a few old hawthorns and self-sown firs: out of the hill several streams were filtered, which uniting at its foot, formed a large and clear pond of near twenty acres, fed by several imperceptible currents from other eminences which sheltered that side of the park; and the basin between the hills and the higher parts of it being thus filled, the water found its way over a stony boundary, where it was passable by a foot bridge unless in time of floods; and from thence fell into a lower part of the ground, where it formed a considerable river; and, winding
among

among willows and poplars for near a mile, again spread into a still larger lake, on the edge of which was a mill, and opposite, without the park paling, wild heaths, where the ground was sandy, broken, and irregular, still however marked by plantations, made on it by the Rayland family. It was along the lower road, which went through woods to the edge of what was called the upper pond, that Orlando took his way. Just as he arrived at the water, from the deep gloom of the tall firs through which he passed, the moon appeared behind the opposite coppices, and threw her long line of trembling radiance on the water. It was a cold but clear evening, and, though early in November, the trees were not yet entirely stripped of their discoloured leaves:—a low wind sounded hollow through the firs and stone-pines over his head, and then faintly sighed among the reeds that crowded into the water: no other sound was heard, but, at distant intervals, the cry of the wild fowl concealed among them, or the dull murmur of the

current, which was now low. Orlando had hardly ever felt himself so impressed with those feelings which inspire poetic effusions :—Nature appeared to pause, and to ask the turbulent and troubled heart of man, whether his silly pursuits were worth the toil he undertook for them ? Peace and tranquillity seemed here to have retired to a transient abode ; and Orlando, as slowly he traversed the narrow path over ground made hollow by the roots of these old trees, stepped as lightly as if he feared to disturb them. Insensibly he began to compare this scene, the scenes he every day saw of rural beauty and rural content, with those into which his destiny was about to lead him—

“ Oh, Monimia !” sighed he, “ why cannot I remain with thee in this my native country ? How happy should I be to be allowed to cultivate one of the smallest of those farms which belong to the Rayland estate, and, comprising in thy society and that of my family all my felicity, have no wish but to live and die without reading that great book which they call the World !—

Alas !

Alas ! shall I ever understand its language ? shall I ever become an adept in the principles it teaches ? and shall I be happier if I do ? — But they tell me that a young man should not be idle ! that he must be something, a lawyer or a soldier ! and yet, to assist men in ruining each other, and spoiling the simple dignity of justice, to learn the business of the first, and to learn the art of destroying honourably our fellow-men, the whole concern of the second. — There are, however, other professions, it is true — I might be a clergyman, and remain here with little to do but to ride twenty or thirty miles of a Sunday, to execute, with the hurry of a postman, the duties I should have sworn to fulfil : and can I conscientiously do what I see done every day ? Impossible ! — I might too be a merchant : but that I have no talents for a profession, honourable as I allow it to be, where the mind is continually chained to the calculation of profit and loss ; and if I am to enter into active life, let it be rather in any line than that which shall confine my activity.

vity to a counting-house—For then, Monimia! I must equally leave thee, and live among those who value nothing but money, and who would ridicule a passion like mine.” —He paused, and again looked around him. “How beautiful a scene!” continued he; “I would that Monimia were here to enjoy it!—But never am I allowed to point out to her these lovely prospects, never permitted to cultivate that pure and elegant taste which she has received from nature; and I am now about to tell her that we are to part never perhaps to meet more!—Yet the die is cast: I have promised—nay, I ought to obey my father—and I go——” A deep and mournful reverie succeeded, as, walking onward, his rapid imagination described to him all the sad possibilities that might arise between him and his happiness. In this desponding temper, but without meeting any one to interrupt him in his intended visit to Monimia, he reached the turret, and softly and silently ascended the stair-case. He took the usual precautions to ascertain that Monimia

nimia was alone; and then, being admitted for a moment to speak to her, he assured her that she might, without any danger, venture to his room that evening. He told her he had much to say to her—much, on which their future happiness depended, to offer to her consideration; and therefore he besought her to divest herself of her fears, and to oblige him. Mouimia, confiding entirely in him, promised to be ready; and Orlando, then going through the servants' hall, as if he had that moment arrived from West Wolverton, desired Betty to make up his fire and prepare his bed, saying, that he was come back to his own apartments, on the arrival of his brother at home. He then enquired of Pattenfon, if he thought Mrs. Rayland could be spoken to that evening? “I know nothing of the matter,” answered the old butler in a very fullen tone; “you may ask the women folks, as you’re always a-dangling after them.—When I saw Madam last, she was not in a way very like to be troubled with company to-night.”

Orlando;

Orlando, angry and disgusted by this rudeness, now enquired of the cook, who, though she rivalled in person and features the dame Leonarda of Gil Blas, was a great admirer of beauty in others, and had always beheld Orlando with partial eyes. "Is Mrs. Rayland ill, then, Martha?" said he. "Not that I knows on," replied the woman—"Only a few twinges of the gout about her feet, much as ordinary, that makes her, I reckon, a little peevish: and I understood that Madam was a little out of sorts at hearing nothing of you yesterday; and they've been a-telling her as how you dined out with them there gentlefolks at the Castle, as Madam hates worse than any varmint."

"So," thought Orlando, "I ~~am~~ at length become of consequence enough to be missed if I am longer absent than usual! but the officious malice of whoever it was that related our dinner party yesterday, has probably spoiled my reception.—Can you tell me, Martha, whether your lady is likely to see me to-night, if I send up for leave?"

"Lord!

"Lord! I'll answer for't," answered the cook; "ifackins, I believe Madam, if she was fairly left to herself, is always as glad to see you as can be—I'll go up now, if you please, and let her know you be here."

This courteous offer Orlando readily accepted; and in a few moments Martha returned. "Well, Martha, may I go up?" enquired he. "Yes, you may," replied Martha; "but Madam's not in one of her sugar-plum humours, I can tell you.—She've got the gout in her foot, and she've got some vagaries in her head about your going to visit her enemies: you'll have a few sour looks, I doubt—but, Lord! Master Orlando, you've such a good-looking pleasant countenance, that I'll defy the witch of Endor to be anger'd long with you."

Then, thanking his ambassadress for the trouble she had taken, and being somewhat encouraged by her opinion of the powers of his countenance, he walked up stairs.

He tapped at the door, as was his custom; and was, by the shrill sharp voice of

Mrs.

Mrs. Lennard, directed to come in. He was struck, on entering the room, by the sight of Monimia, who stood near the fire watching the moment when a saucepan, in which some medicine Mrs. Rayland was causing to be made, should be ready to remove. Without, however, noticing her, he approached his venerable cousin, in whose countenance, which seemed to have gained no additional sweetness, he did not read a very favourable answer to his enquiry of—how she found herself?

“No matter how,” replied she with abrupt asperity; “if it had been of any consequence to you, you would have asked yesterday, I suppose.”

“I was detained all day by my father, Madam; and I do most truly assure you (and never was any declaration more sincere than this of Orlando), that I was very unhappy at being detained all day from the Hall.”

“Humph!” cried Mrs. Rayland, “your new friends no doubt made you amends. I thought, Sir, you had known that when people go *there*, I never desire to see them

here,

bye, not I. "I wish, if you like such acquaintance, you had taken the hint. But perhaps you thought that you might take to your brother's courses, and no harm done. For my part, I shall wash my hands of any concern about it, let what will be the end on't."

Orlando now began with calmness, yet without any thing like sycophant submission, to account for his father's having been led by the entreaties of General Tracy, to whom he thought himself much obliged, to break through a resolution he had taken never to visit at Carlisle Castle:—"a resolution," added Orlando, "that he now heartily wishes he had adhered to, as he found the society such as he neither approves for me, or can endure for himself. I assure you, Madam, he never intends to repeat an experiment, which nothing but his wishes to oblige the General made him consent to now."

"Well," said Mrs. Rayland, a little appeased, "it is very wonderful to me that General Tracy, a man of family, can associate

ciate with these low-bred upstarts—people who always will give one the notion of having got into the coaches they were designed to drive—But so goes this world ! Money does every thing—money destroys all distinctions !—Your Creoles and your East-India people over-run every body—Money, money does every thing.”

“ There is one thing, however, Madam,” answered Orlando, “ that it does not seem to have done—It does not appear to me to have given to this Mr. Stockton, either the mind or the manners of a gentleman.”

“ Indeed, child !” cried the old lady : “ Well, I am glad that you learn to distinguish.—Poor wretch ! I’ve heard that his father walked up out of Yorkshire without shoes, and was taken by some rick-packer to clean his warehouse, and go on errands. Well, so it is in trade !—So you think him vulgar and ill-bred ?—But I suppose you had a very profuse entertainment : can you remember the dishes ?”

Orlando could with difficulty help smiling at the pains Mrs. Rayland took to feed her

her

her disquiet, by obtaining minute particulars of the man whose ostentatious display of wealth so continually offended her. He assured her, however, that he was, in regard to the variety of ornaments of a table, so little of an adept, that, though he knew there was both turtle and venison, he could not tell the name of any other dish. "But, I believe, Madam," said he, "there was almost every thing that at this time of the year comes to table, dressed every way that could be imagined."

"Kickshaws, and French frippery, spoiling wholesome dishes." If I had my health," cried Mrs. Rayland as if animated anew with a truly British spirit—"if I had my health, I would ask the favour of General Tracy to dine at Rayland Hall. Indeed I would request his company to the tenants' feast at my own table, and shew him, if he is too young a man to remember it, what an old English table was, when we were too wise to run after foreign gewgaws, and were content with the best of every thing dressed in the English fashion by English people."

Orlando

Orlando had a thousand reasons to promote a plan as unexpected as it was desirable. Besides the hope he had that the conversation of the General might reconcile Mrs. Rayland to a plan for his independence, and engage her to contribute to its being advantageously carried into execution, he was amused with the idea of seeing together two such originals as Mrs. Rayland and General Tracy; and he knew, that as the latter was a *man of family*, and so very polite, he should not risk their mutually disliking each other by bringing them together; or at least that, if such a circumstance should happen, those manners, which both piqued themselves on possessing, would prevent their shewing it.—For these, and for many other reasons, he eagerly seized on the hint Mrs. Rayland had dropped. “Dear Madam,” cried he, “I heartily hope you *will* be well enough. The General would be greatly flattered by such a distinction! I know that nothing would oblige him so much. When is the tenants’ feast to be? I wish, if it is fixed, you

you would permit me to be your messenger to-morrow, and to carry him an invitation."

"Truly, child," replied Mrs. Rayland, whose anger seemed to be quite evaporated, "I am so out of the use of having company, that I don't know well what to say to it. I find my people have fixed the tenants' feast for Thursday next, that is, this day week; and if I were sure of being quite well—Lennard, what do you think of the matter?"

Lennard, who loved nothing better than great dinners, in which she was of so much consequence, answered, "Why, indeed, Ma'am, I think you'll be quite well enough—nay, I could venture to say so positively. Your foot is getting better apace; and in other respects, when you have been free from pain for a while, I have not known you better these many years."

"Well, Orlando, then," resumed the old lady, "we'll consider of it, and let you know to-morrow.—You have taken to your bed below again, I find?"

"I have,

“ I have, Madam, with your permission.”

“ Well, then, you may come and breakfast with me ; and, for to-night, order what you please for your supper in your own room.”

Orlando, rejoiced to be thus reconciled, now wished her a good-night, and retired ; casting, as he went, a melancholy glance toward Monimia, who, quite unnoticed by either of the ladies, had stood the whole time with her eyes fixed on the fire, and her beautiful arms exposed to its scorching heat, while she was employed in watching the important preparation that was boiling. But Monimia herself, far from feeling her situation, would have undergone infinitely more inconvenience, for as many hours as she now had done minutes, to have enjoyed the satisfaction of hearing Orlando's voice, even when his words were not addressed to her, and of observing the favour he was in with Mrs. Kayland ; whose anger, however she seemed desirous of cherishing it, was put to flight on the first apology of her young favourite.

C H A P. VI.

THE meeting of the evening promised to be undisturbed. It was long since Orlando had seen his Monimia quietly seated by the fire in the Study ; and now that he was once more to enjoy that happiness, he could not determine to embitter it by speaking of the probability there was that he was soon to leave her, and enter on a new mode of life. He could, when they were actually together, the less resolve to speak of this, as Monimia appeared in unusual spirits ; and from what she had observed of Mrs. Rayland's behaviour to him, in the interview at which she had been present, she found reason for forming more sanguine hopes than she had ever yet indulged, that their delicious visions were not chimerical ; and that Orlando,

Orlando, if not master of Rayland-Hall, would yet be amply provided for by the favour of its present possessor.

Instead, therefore, of destroying these flattering visions, which lent to the lovely features of Monimia the most cheerful animation, he endeavoured to divest his own mind of the painful reflections it had of late entertained; and instead of talking of what *was* to happen, he wished to fortify the mind of Monimia against whatever *might* happen, by giving her a taste for reading, and cultivating her excellent understanding. The books he had given her, the extracts she had made from them, and her remarks, afforded them conversation, and gave to Orlando exquisite delight. He had animated the lovely statue, and, like another Prometheus, seemed to have drawn his fire from heaven. The ignorance and the prejudices in which Monimia had been brought up, now gave way to such instruction as she derived from Addison and other celebrated moralists. She understood, and had peculiar pleasure in reading the poets, which

which Orlando had selected for her ; and when she repeated, in a fascinating voice, some of the passages she particularly admired, Orlando was inspired with the most ardent wish to become a poet himself.

Very different was the way in which his elder brother passed this evening. Tormented with fear and remorse, that unfortunate young man had returned to his long-deserted home, for no other reason than because he had, during his northern expedition, lost to his companions every guinea that he could by any means raise, and had besides contracted with them a very considerable debt of honour. He knew not how to apply to his father, whom he had already impoverished ; yet his pride would not let him return to Mr. Stockton's, whither some of the party were again gone, till he had the means of satisfying their demands against him. In this emergency he came home, in hopes of finding some pretence to procure the money of his mother, whom he believed he could persuade to borrow it for him of her brother Mr. Woodford, as she had

done a less considerable sum once before ; or at all events to gain a few days, in which he might consider what to do.

It was to the dejection he felt on the awkward circumstances to which he had reduced himself, that the gravity and steadiness of manner was owing, which his father took for contrition and reformation. It lasted, however, no longer than till the next evening, when, after tea, Mrs. Somerive as usual, in order to amuse the General, proposed cards—Mr. Somerive, however, having a person with him upon business from whom he could not disengage himself, and Orlando having returned to Rayland Hall immediately after dinner, there was not enough to make a whist table (as none of the young ladies played), and therefore young Somerive proposed to the General to sit down to piquet.

To this proposal he of course consented, and, either from chance or design, the General lost every party, and had presently paid to his antagonist twelve guineas. Animated by this success, especially as it was
against

against a man who was known to be in habits of playing at the first clubs, Philip Somerive again proposed playing after supper. Fortune continued to be propitious; and when his father, mother and sisters retired, at a later hour than ordinary, he still continued at the table, where he was now a winner of about fifty guineas.

They were no sooner out of his way, than the true spirit of gaming, which their presence had checked, broke out.

“This is poor piddling work, General!” exclaimed he: “Do you not think hazard a better thing?”

The General answered coolly, that it certainly was; “but,” added he, “I suppose my good host would think his house polluted by having the necessary instruments in it. He has no other dice, I dare swear, than those in the back-gammon table.”

“Oh! as to that,” answered young Somerive, “I am always provided with an apparatus in case of emergency—there is no travelling without such a resource—I have the pretty creatures up stairs. What

“~~For~~ you, General—shall we waste an hour with them?”

“With all my heart,” replied Tracy.
“Let us see if you are as much befriended by chance, as you have been by skill.”

Young Somerive now produced from his travelling portmanteau a box and dice: he put a green cloth over the table, that the rattling of them might not be heard in the house; and then telling the servants that none need sit up but the General's servant, they began to play, and continued at it till morning broke, with various success—But on quitting it, Somerive found himself a very considerable gainer, and retired to his bed flushed with the hope that the General, all veteran as he appeared, and calmly as he played, was a pigeon, from whose wings he might pluck the feathers which were wanting to repair his own.

The General, who only wanted a study of his character, and to whom hundreds were as nothing, when he had any favourite project in view, was now perfectly assured that, by losing money to him, or by
• supplying

supplying him with it when he lost it to others, this young man would become wholly subservient to his wishes, however contrary to honour or conscience. He did not dislike play, though he never regularly pursued it; and had one of those cool heads in such matters, which had prevented his ever suffering by it. He had generally been a winner, and particularly in betting:—he frequented, when he was in London, all the houses where high play is carried on; and was so much accustomed to see thousands paid and received at these places as matters of course, that he held the trifle he had paid to Philip Somerive the evening before as not worth remembering. It was therefore with some surprise that he heard Mr. Somerive, who had called him apart the next morning, express in very forcible terms, his great concern that his son had won so large a sum of him. If the General felt any concern, it was that Philip should have been unguarded enough to speak of it. He soon, however, learned that Mr. Somerive alluded solely to the

fifty guineas he had won at piquet, and that of the subsequent transactions of the evening he knew nothing. This therefore he carefully concealed, and, assuring Mr. Somerive that he had almost forgot they played at all, conjured him not to be uneasy about it,

“I know, my dear General,” said Somerive, “I know perfectly well that this is a mere trifle to you; but to my son it may, nay it will have the worst consequence. He is, I see with an aching heart, too much devoted to play—Success only nourishes this ruinous passion—And distressed as I have been, and indeed am, by his conduct, I should rather have paid an hundred pounds for him than have seen him win fifty.”

The General endeavoured to quiet, on this head, the apprehensions of the unhappy father, by telling him that he saw nothing in the young man that was not at his age, and with his prospects, very excusable.

“It is surely,” said he, “hazardous, my good friend, to check your son too much.

If

If home is rendered utterly unpleasant to him, his volatility seeks resource abroad ; and there you know how many designing people beset a young man of his expectations."

" Good God !" exclaimed Somerive, "*what are* his expectations ? He has impressed you, I see, my dear Sir, with the same idea which has in fact undone him, and will undo us all. "What expectations has he that can in the least be relied upon, unless it be of this small estate, which he is already dismembering, and which will soon disappear—ah ! very soon indeed, in the hands of a gamester."

" Tie it up, then," said the General.

" I cannot," answered Somerive ; " for it is entailed, and, except my wife's jointure of an hundred a year, which with difficulty I contrived to settle upon her, he may dissipate it all, and I have no doubt but he will."

" You judge, I think, too hardly of him. Someriving is surely to be forgiven him, who has always been told that he must be

heir to the great property of the Raylands, and possess one of the largest landed estates in the county."

"O! would to heaven he never had been told so!" said Mr. Somerive with a deep sigh. "If ever, my dear General, he should talk to you about it, pray endeavour to wean him from expectations so ruinous, and, I think, so fallacious. It is true that I am heir at law to all the estates of Sir Orlando Rayland my grandfather, in default of Sir Hildebrand's daughters having issue, but not if the survivor of them disposes of it by will, for the whole is hers without any restriction; and there is not the least chance of her dying *without* a will, for I know she is *never* without one: and the people who surround her take especial care that her own family shall be excluded from it."

"You do not then suppose," said the General, "you do not believe it possible that these people, by whom I conclude you mean those old servants of whom I have heard you speak, have interest enough with her to secure to themselves so large a property

perty as Mrs. Rayland possesses. I should think it more likely that though she will probably give them considerable legacies, she will leave the estate to the next heir; her pride will urge her to this, perhaps, on the condition of his taking the name of Rayland."

"I fear, not," answered Mr. Somerville. "She has a very singular temper, and has always been taught that the sister of *her* father Sir Hildebrand disgraced herself by marrying my father. She has on a thousand occasions given me to understand, that the small portion of the Rayland blood which I have the honour to boast, is much debased by having mingled with that of a plebeian; and that the blood of my children being still a degree farther removed from the Raylands, she cannot consider them as belonging to the family, which is in her opinion extinct—She means therefore to perpetuate its remembrance by the only method in which she believes she can do it worthily; and, after giving her servants considerable legacies——perhaps

something to Orlando—to have recourse to the common refuge of posthumous pride, and, with her large landed estates, to endow an hospital, which shall be called after her name.”

The General exclaimed loudly against such a method of settling her property ; But, after hearing on what Mr. Somerive founded his opinion, he agreed that it seemed but too probable. “ And yet,” added he, “ it appears to be more the interest of these servants, by whom you say she is governed, that the estate should descend to an individual—particularly that of the old housekeeper, who, from what I can make out of the scraps I have picked up here and there about this Monimia, seems to have a plan of drawing in your youngest son to marry her ; and of course it must be her wish that *he* should be Mrs. Rayland’s heir.”

“ I have not discovered,” replied Somerive, “ in all I have collected from Orlando, that the aunt is at all privy to their attachment. But that indeed may be her

art—

art—She possesses more than almost any woman I ever knew; and had she much less, she must know that the bare suspicion of such an intrigue, on the part of Mrs. Rayland, would occasion the disgrace of Orlando—the expulsion of the girl from the house—and perhaps the ruin of herself, if the least idea occurred of her being of their counsel.”

“Upon the whole, then, my friend,” cried the General, “I think that the putting Orlando into some profession immediately seems the only prudent measure you can take. This will probably ascertain Mrs. Rayland’s intentions, if they are in his favour; and, if they are not, will remove him from a situation which appears in my mind a thousand times more likely to ruin him for life, than even those imprudences of which you complain in his brother: for be assured, my dear Sir, a young fellow is never so completely ruined as when he has married foolishly—Every other folly is retrievable; but an engagement of that sort blasts a man’s fortune for

ever : and the wisest thing he can do afterwards is to hang himself."

Though Mr. Somerive, who was not a "man of the world," and who had experienced many years of happiness with a woman whom he married for love, was by no means of Tracy's opinion as to marriages of affection in general, he saw the variety of evils such a marriage would bring on Orlando, in as strong a light as his friend could represent them. He therefore entirely acquiesced in the necessity of his being removed from Rayland Hall ; and waited with impatience for Orlando's account of what had passed in that conference which he had undertaken to hold with the old lady, on the subject of his entering the army.

Just as he parted from General Tracy, who about an hour and a half before dinner retired to his toilet, Orlando appeared on horseback. His father met him ; and bidding him join him in the garden as soon as he had put his horse in the stable, he walked thither—Orlando in a moment attended him. " Well," said Mr. Somerive

rive gravely, " have you had an opportunity of conversing with Mrs. Rayland on this matter ? I have it every hour more at heart, and am determined that you shall be removed from your present situation, unless, what is not to be expected, she signifies her positive resolution to make you very ample amends for your loss of time, and gives me assurances of it."

Orlando, in this peremptory determination of his father, fancied he saw the machinations of his brother to get him away from the Hall ; but, without expressing any part of the pain such a suspicion gave him, he answered, " You know, my dear Sir, that in our last conference on this subject, I assured you of what I now desire to repeat, that I live only to obey you ; but I have had no opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Rayland on this subject ; for when I saw her on the first evening of my return to the Hall, it was with great difficulty I could appease the anger she felt at our having dined with Stockton."

" She knew it then ?"

" Oh,

“ Oh, yes!—Lennard and Pattenfon take care ſhe ſhall know every thing. At length, however, I had the good fortune, not only to obtain a remiſſion of my offence, but to engage her to invite our family and the General to dine at her table on Thursday, when the tenants’ feaſt is to be held at the Hall. Mrs. Rayland piques herſelf on ſhewing the General, whom ſhe reſpects as a man of family, a ſpecimen of old Engliſh hoſpitality, in oppoſition to the modern profuſion of the Caſtle—and her deſire to obtain his ſuffrage in favour of the ancient mode of living at Rayland Hall, has performed what no other conſideration would have effected. This unexpected project entered her head the moment I had deſcribed our viſit; and all yeſterday was paſſed in conſidering about it, and debating with Lennard whether ſhe ſhould be well enough. To-day it is decided that ſhe ſhall; and I am ſent with the invitation, which certainly you and my mother and ſiſters will accept; and I ſuppoſe General Tracy will oblige us by going alſo.”

“ Of

“Of that there can be no doubt,” replied Mr. Somerive.

“I thought, therefore,” added Orlando, “that you and the General might have an opportunity, during the course of the day, of introducing the conversation relative to my entering the army; and that it would be perhaps better than my abruptly disclosing what may, in some of her humours, appear to Mrs. Rayland as a desire on my part to quit her.”

“You have certainly given my ancient cousin love powder, Orlando,” said Mr. Somerive smiling; “for I never heard that, even in her younger days, she shewed for any body as much affection as she lately has done to you.”

“And yet,” replied Orlando, “I am almost certain that it goes no farther than a little present kindness, or perhaps a small legacy.”

Mr. Somerive, feeling that this was too probable, and was indeed what he had just before been repeating to General Tracy, sighed deeply—and bidding Orlando go

* with his message of invitation to his mother and sisters, he sent up the card to the General ; and then went on his usual circuit round his farm, desiring Orlando to stay dinner.

C H A P. VII.

ORLANDO returned to Rayland Hall in the evening, carrying with him the most polite answer from General Tracy, and, from his own family, assurances of the grateful pleasure with which they accepted Mrs. Rayland's invitation for the following Thursday. Poor Monimia too, though she was to have no other part in this festivity than to assist her aunt in preparing for it, heard with satisfaction from Orlando that it was fixed, because she believed that this unusual civility towards his family and their guest was an indubitable mark of Mrs. Rayland's increasing affection for him.

Orlando, however, who from his father's last conversation, and from his persuasion that Mrs. Rayland would not oppose it, saw that his departure was certain, and would soon happen, thought it cruel to encourage the flattering impressions which the
soft

soft heart of Monimia so readily received, and which he had himself taught her to cherish when they were apparently much less likely to be realised. He therefore, when they met this evening, renewed, what he had sometimes distantly touched upon before, the probability that he must soon enter the army, and quit, at least for a time, the spot which, while she remained on it, contained all that gave value to his life. The tender, timid Monimia, in whose idea every kind of danger was attendant on the name of soldier, was thunderstruck with this intelligence : and it was not till Orlando had tried every argument to sooth and console her, that she was able to shed tears. “ Could we hope, my Monimia,” said he when he found her composed enough to listen to him—“ could we hope to continue as we are, and to converse thus undiscovered for years to come, tell me if there is not too much bitter mingled with the few transient moments of happiness, to make us reasonably *wish* to continue it ? When we meet, is it not always in fear and apprehension ?

apprehension? and are we not ever liable to the same alarm as that from which you suffered so cruelly three weeks since?—Alas! even now we are in the power of an unprincipled ruffian, who, though he appeared willing to engage for mutual secrecy, may, in a fit of drunkenness, betray us; or, through mere insolence, tell—because he has the power of telling. He did not see you; but he knows, and indeed so does Pattenfon, that somebody was with me; and the very jealousy that misleads the old rogue Pattenfon, will perhaps make him watch and discover us. I need not, Monimia, describe all I should suffer for you if that were to happen; nothing would remain for us but to fly together: and surely I need not add, that if I did not fear to expose you, my angel, to the miseries of poverty, I would, without hazarding a discovery, fly to-morrow; but I am, you know, under age, and we could not marry in England. If I was thus to disoblige my father, he would abandon me for ever, and from Mrs. Rayland I could expect

. peck

fect nothing. Such is the melancholy train of thought I have been compelled to admit in reflecting on our present situation. Perhaps the line of life that is proposed for me is the only one that we can with hope look forward to for the future.” —He paused a moment: Monimia stifled the sobs that convulsed her bosom; she could not speak, but sat with her handkerchief to her eyes, and her head resting on her hand, while he proceeded—“It is certain that I must tear myself from you; that I must enter on a new scene of life, and perhaps encounter some difficulties and hardships: but would you not despise a man of my age, who would not so purchase independence? If I have a profession, I shall have something on which to depend, if Mrs. Rayland will not, and my father cannot provide for me; something on which, if I have tolerable fortune, I may in a few years be enabled to support my Monimia. Can I, ought I with such hopes to hesitate?”

“I allow,”

“ I allow,” replied Monimia with a deep sigh—“ I allow that you ought not.”

“ While General Tracy lives,” resumed Orlando, “ he will be my friend ; at least such are his promises to my father. He assures him that he will make a point of my speedy promotion ; and his interest is certainly such as leaves no doubt of his having the power to do it.”

“ Ah, Orlando !” said Monimia in a low and broken voice, “ you speak only of the good, and forget or conceal the evil : What if you are maimed, or killed ? What then becomes of Monimia, who could not die too, but must live perhaps the most desolate and miserable creature upon earth ?”

“ General Tracy,” replied Orlando, “ has assured my father, that the regiment in which he means to procure me a commission, and for which they are now recruiting, is about to be immediately recalled from America, where the war must very soon terminate in favour of England, and that therefore I shall certainly not be sent abroad : he even says, that as soon as
I have

"I have my commission, it is highly probable that I shall be ordered into this country on a recruiting party, and may take up my quarters for two or three months in this neighbourhood."

These reasonable arguments, joined to the flattering hope that Orlando might, though he entered on a profession by which he would, she believed, become independent, still remain in England, and even be occasionally in his native county, added to the conviction that they could not long continue to see each other without being discovered, reconciled Monimia to the thoughts of his accepting the commission offered to him by the General; and she became more calm, and able to talk of it with some degree of composure. Orlando, on their parting for that time, besought her to assure him that she would make herself easy, and learn to think of his destination rather as a matter of satisfaction than apprehension. Monimia promised all he desired: but she was no sooner alone than her apprehensions again returned, and the
sad

sad possibilities that she had before enumerated recurred in all their terrors to her imagination. To these many were added of which she dared not speak to Orlando; the fears that he might forget her; and that when once entered on new scenes, and among all the beauty, elegance, and accomplishments which she read of in magazines and newspapers, the humble Monimia would be remembered no longer. This seemed to her so probable, and was so distressing to her heart, that she thought she could better endure almost every other evil. Sleep refused to banish these cruel ideas from her mind; and the morning broke, and called her from her restless bed to her task of attending on her aunt in the housekeeper's room, before she could find any comfort in any of her reflections, unless it was the hope that Mrs. Rayland might oppose the scheme of sending Orlando away, since Monimia persuaded herself that she every day became fonder of his company.

Monimia appeared before her aunt so pale, from want of sleep, and from the
 • acute

acute uneasiness she had undergone, that Mrs. Lennard, notwithstanding her usual insensibility, took notice of it.

“ Hey-day, girl !” cried she, “ why what’s the matter now ? Why you look, I protest, as if you had been up all night ! Pray what have you been about ? ”

“ About, aunt !” said Monimia, while a faint blush, excited by fear and consciousness, wavered a moment on her cheek—
“ I have been about nothing.”

“ That is what you generally are about, I think,” replied Mrs. Lennard harshly.

“ But I suppose you have been sitting up after some nonsense or other—with your books or your writing. I shall put an end to Madam Betty’s career, I promise you ; I know she lets you have candles, and gets books for you out of the Study, though I have time after time forbidden her to do any such thing.”

Monimia, willing to let it be thought that Betty did do so, rather than excite any other suspicion by denying it, only said mildly—“ I hope, dear aunt, there is no

harm

harm in my trying to improve myself, if I do not therefore neglect what you order me to do?"

"Improve yourself!—Yes, truly, a pretty improvement—Your chalky face and padded eyes are mighty improvements: and I'd be glad to know what good your reading does you, but to give you a hankering after what you've no right to expect? An improved lady will be above helping me, I suppose, very soon."

"When I *am*, my dear aunt," answered Monimia, "it will be time enough for you to forbid my reading; but till then, pray don't be angry if I endeavour to obtain a little common instruction."

"Don't be impertinent," exclaimed Mrs. Lennard; "don't be insolent—for if you are, Miss, this house is no place for you.—I see already the blessed effects of your reading—you fancy yourself a person of consequence: but I shall take care to put an end to it; for, if Betty supplies you with candles, I'll discharge her."

"~~She~~ *She* has *not* indeed, my dear aunt,"

said Monimia, whose generous mind could not bear that another should suffer for her.

“She has not!—what has she not?” enquired Mrs. Lennard.

“She has not lately supplied me with candles,” replied Monimia.

“How is it, then,” cried Mrs. Lennard, fixing on her a stern and enquiring eye, “that light is sometimes, aye and very lately too, seen from your window, at hours when your own candle is taken away, and when you ought to be in bed?”

To this Monimia could answer nothing, but that it was true she had now and then saved a piece of wax candle herself; but, in order to put an end to an enquiry which had already made her tremble with the most cruel apprehensions, she endeavoured less to account for what *had* happened, and which she could not deny, than to appease her aunt by very earnest assurances that what offended her should happen no more, and that, since she so much
disliked

disliked her reading of a night, she would never again practise it.

Mrs. Lennard seemed to be somewhat satisfied by these protestations—though while Monimia was with, many tears repeating them, her fierce eyes were fixed on the countenance of her trembling niece with a look of questioning doubt, which made Monimia shrink with dread—for it seemed to intimate that more was suspected than was expressed.

At length, however, she condescended to appear pacified; and summoning Betty and another of the maid-servants, she gave them their employments in preparing for the grand dinner: then ordering Monimia to take her share, and the superintendence of the whole, she returned to the parlour; and poor Monimia, glad to be relieved from her presence, proceeded as cheerfully in her task as her melancholy reflections on what had passed with Orlando the preceding night, and her newly-awakened dread of her aunt's suspicions, would allow her to do.

Mr. Somerive was much at a loss to know how to act in regard to his eldest son : fondly flattering himself that this beloved son had seen the dangerous errors of his former conduct, he could not bear the idea of shewing any resentment at what was past, or that, by his being left out of the party going to Rayland Hall, he should be considered as an exile from the favour of Mrs. Rayland ; yet, to let him go without an invitation, he knew, would give offence, and he knew not how to set about obtaining one. Orlando, who passed a few moments with him in the course of the preceding Wednesday, saw his father's uneasiness, because he had felt something of the same kind himself about his brother ; and he generously, though without making any merit of it, undertook to remove this source of vexation, by engaging Mrs. Rayland to invite him. This was an arduous task, as the old Lady had not seen him for more than two years, and during that time had heard only evil reports of his conduct. The offence he had given her
by

by associating with the Stockton set, and even joining in those trespasses of which she believed she had so much reason to complain, had embittered her mind against him, even more than his gaieties and extravagance:—yet Orlando, by assuring Mrs. Rayland that he was now sensible of his error, that he was come home with a resolution to remain with his family, and that it would discourage him in the career of reformation if she did not seem ready to forgive, and again consider him as a part of it, so flattered her self-consequence, and soothed her resentment, that she agreed to receive Philip as one of her guests, and commissioned Orlando to carry an invitation to his brother: nor could she, with all her natural severity of temper, and little sensibility to great or generous actions, help being affected by the noble disinterestedness of her young favourite, who thus laboured to reconcile to her a brother who would have been considered by most young men as a formidable rival in her favour, and have been assiduously kept at the distance

to which he had thrown himself: This exalted goodness of heart she put down immediately to the account of the Rayland blood; and in praising Orlando to Mrs. Lennard, to whom she now often spoke of him with pleasure, she remarked, that he every day became more and more like the Rayland family—"What fine eyes the young man has!" cried she; "and how they flashed fire when he was pleading for that sad brother of his with so much earnestness!—And then when I seemed willing to oblige him, what a fine countenance! I could almost have fancied it was my grandfather's picture walked out of its frame, if it had not been for the difference of dress!"

Mrs. Lennard assented, and encouraged every favourable idea her Mistress entertained of Orlando; but all this while a mine was proceeding against him, of which the success would inevitably ruin all his hopes. This originated in the jealousy of Patenson, who, whatever favour he obtained by dint of presents and money from his coquettish

coquettish dulcinea, could never divest himself of his apprehensions that Orlando was a successful rival. This cruel fear had taken possession of his mind long before the discovery of Jonas Wilkins; and notwithstanding the girl's solemn protestations that she was in her own bed at the time she was accused of being with Orlando in his Study, and the offers of the woman who lived in the same room to confirm this by her *Bible oath*, Pattenson could never be persuaded but that it was Betty herself; because, having not the slightest suspicion of Monimia, who was, he knew, locked in by her aunt every night, he believed that it was impossible it could be any other person. Betty, in order to tease him, sometimes affected to be conscious that the accusation was true, while she persisted in denying it; and Orlando rather encouraged than repressed a notion that prevented any conjectures which might have glanced towards Monimia.

For three weeks, therefore, this uneasy

Suspicion had corroded the bosom of the amorous though venerable Mr. Patterson, who, greatly as he loved his ease, resigned it to the gratification of his revenge; and who determined to detect Betty, and in doing so thought he should have an opportunity of ruining Orlando with his Lady, and thus getting out of his way a rival who might one day be his Master; and whom he hated, not only on account of his love, but of his interest; for so highly had he been in favour with all the three ladies, that each had, in dying, given him a very considerable legacy, and recommended him to the survivor; and he did not doubt but that, on the decease of his present Mistress, he should find his property inferior to that of few gentlemen in the county.

The gradual increase, therefore, of the favour shewn to Orlando did not at all please him; but his attempts to injure him with Mrs. Rayland had never succeeded, and began to be displeasing to her. Still, however, he knew that, if Orlando were detected

detected of an intrigue with one of her women servants, it was an offence which Mrs. Rayland would never pardon; and though this discovery would certainly occasion the discharge of the fair Helen for whom he sighed, Pattenfon was sure that Orlando could not take her into his protection for want of money; while, being dismissed without a character by the two inexorable vestals, his Lady and her companion, the girl would be glad to make terms with him; and he was quite rich enough to undertake to keep her in some of the neighbouring towns, till she might be supplanted by some newer object.

Such were the speculations of the politic Pattenfon; but, like many other politicians, he pursued, among the many crooked paths before him, that which led him from his purpose. Instead of watching Orlando, he set himself to watch Betty, who never went in even with a message to him in his Study without Pattenfon following her; and on the night he engaged her to sit up for him, the butler was concealed in a

closet within the servants' hall, and heard all their conversation; and though what then passed tended directly to prove to Pattenfon that he was in an error, he persuaded himself that they suspected his concealment, and had agreed upon what they should say to mislead him.

Instead, therefore, of rejoicing to find his suspicions were not confirmed, he was only irritated to find that his attempts to detect the supposed lovers were baffled; and he redoubled his vigilance in watching Betty, and engaged one of the footmen in the same office. This was the same man who had seen Orlando cross the park one morning at a very early and unusual hour, and who then taking him at a distance for a poacher, had pursued and stopped him; circumstances which the fellow, who was the mere creature of Pattenfon, had afterwards related to him, with conjectures as to the reason of Orlando's appearance that had helped to raise higher those suspicions Pattenfon had before entertained.

That Mrs. Rayland had determined to have

have company at her own table, and particularly the family of Somerive, on the day of the tenants' feast, was a terrible vexation to Pattenfon—who, instead of presiding like the master of the house in the hall, would now be only the butler at the side-board in the great dining-room; and to chagrin for the consequence he thus lost, was added the mortification of knowing that while he should be busied in attending on his Lady up stairs, Orlando, who on these occasions, which happened twice a year, always mingled with the young farmers, would have all the *lady's* of the hall to himself.

It had been the custom of the house, time immemorial, for the landlord, receiving his Michaelmas rents, to give the most numerously-attended entertainment of the year, and to allow the tenants' sons and daughters, their friends, and the servants of the family, to have a fiddle in the great hall. The Mrs. Raylands, notwithstanding the state in which they had been educated, had been always, during their youth, led to the

H 6 company

company by their father, and, accompanied by Lady Rayland, had each gone down one dance with some neighbouring gentleman who was invited on purpose, or with the chaplain of the family. Those days, though long since past, with almost all the witnesses of their festivity, were still recollected by Mrs. Rayland with some degree of pleasure; and as she adhered most scrupulously to old customs, however unlike her usual mode of life, this sort of rustic ball given to the tenants had always been kept up, except in those two years that were marked by the death of two of the ladies.—Mrs. Lennard and Mrs. Pattenfon, who had long presided at them, loved the gaiety of the scene, and the consequence they had in it, as they were considered as the master and mistress of the feast;—for though Mrs. Rayland once used to go down to honour it with her presence for ten minutes, she had now left off that custom, from age and infirmity; and her servants, to whom it was attended with some trouble and loss of time, had persuaded

suaded her that she was always ill after such an exertion. It was, therefore, usual with her to sup on this anniversary somewhat earlier than ordinary, and to go to her bed, dismissing Lennard to her post of mistress of the revel, with a strict charge to her to watch assiduously against the intrusion of drunkenness or impropriety; to see that all the guests withdrew in due season, and quite sober; and to settle every thing after their departure for the decorum and tranquillity of the next day.

Mrs. Lennard had in general adhered to these good rules, though she thought herself at liberty a little to vary from them in the detail. Thus she deemed it no breach of the regularity her Lady recommended, if she acceded to the earnest solicitations of a handsome young farmer, who, as she was persuaded, left the buxom damsel his partner, purely for the gratification of going down a dance with her; though it sometimes happened that her interest in the renewal of a lease, or some building wanting on the farm, for which she could effectually

fectually intercede, were more powerful motives than even the honour or the pleasure thus obtained—notwithstanding Mrs. Lennard's assertion, which was probably true, that she had learned to dance of the dancing-master who taught the first Duke of Cumberland and *all* the Princesses, and that she was celebrated for her excellence in that accomplishment, particularly her great agility in the rigadon.

This rigadon, like all early and pleasing acquirements, was still recollected with gratitude for the fame it had obtained for her; and notwithstanding the lapse of years, and some rheumatic complaints, she could occasionally introduce some of its original graces into her country dance. It is true she never performed above one or two at most; but what she *did*, she piqued herself upon executing with a degree of spirit, which made all the operators in cotillon steps, and allemands, “hide their diminished” heels. , But, now alas! a fall she got a few months before, and the cruel, and cowardly attack of the rheumatism on the limb
while

while it was in a disabled state, had put an end to the exhibition of this rigadon step for ever. Yet, with the true spirit of perseverance, Mrs. Lennard, though she danced no more, loved to overlook the dancers, and not having the same reasons as Patenson had to dislike the party proposed, (had with all her interest promoted it—feeling, probably, that the pleasure she resigned in the country-dance “with her rigadon step,” would be amply made up to her in appearing no longer as only house-keeper and attendant, but in the capacity of a companion and friend to Mrs. Rayland; for, now her Lady was so infirm, she was introduced in that character whatever company might be in the house. Far as she was advanced in years, to adorn her person was her foible, and she reflected with some pleasure on the smart and well-fancied dress with which she intended, on this important Thursday, to astonish and outshine the Somerville family. Of this vanity, however, poor Monimia was the victim;

victim; for, after many debates about what she should wear, Mrs. Lennard found something to do to every article of her dress. These alterations were entrusted to Monimia; and at night when Orlando sought her, as usual, in the hope that he might pass an hour with her in her own room, he found her not only indulged with candles, which had been so lately prohibited, but weeping over a task which she doubted whether it would be possible for her to finish, in the time assigned her, to her aunt's satisfaction.

Orlando had a particular interest in her appearing to advantage the next day; for, though he knew she would not be allowed, nor did he wish her to be seen among the guests, he had imagined a project to introduce her and his sister Selina to each other while every other person was engaged. The more he reflected on this scheme, the more practicable it appeared, and the more it flattered his imagination. He, therefore, could not bear to think that,
 * between.

between-fatigue and fretting, the beauty he had said so much of to Selina should not be seen in all its brilliancy. "You shall not," said he, "Monimia, go with me to-night, but you shall go to bed; and if those cursed things must be done, you may finish them in the morning."

"Ah, no!" replied Monimia, wiping away the tears, which on so slight an occasion she was ashamed of letting him see: "no, Orlando, not so—I must neither pass these next four or five hours with you, or in my bed; but must sit up and finish this: for I am very sure that, with the dawn of the morning, my aunt, without considering how little time she has allowed me for this business, will summon me to that which must go forward in the house-keeper's room; and that, to-morrow, I shall have the jellies and syllabubs to make, to give out every thing to the cook, and to help in all the made dishes: perhaps I shall never sit down ten minutes from the time I get up till dinner is sent in: and therefore
what

what I have to do of this sort, must be done to-night."

"Curse on the ridiculous, ostentatious old woman!" exclaimed Orlando. "I cannot bear to think of your being so fatigued!"

"Do not," said Monimia with an angelic smile—"do not let us, my dear friend, be rendered uneasy by trifles, when it is but too probable that we shall have so many real sorrows so soon to contend with. What is the loss of a few hours rest? and of how many hours have not I voluntarily ~~deprived~~ myself! Besides," added she, seeing him gaze on her with a look of deep concern, "to finish the whole is not so great an effort as I foolishly, from low spirits, owing perhaps to thinking too much on the conversation of last night, at first represented it to myself. However, Orlando, instead of my going down to your room, I must sit here."

"And I must not remain with you?" cried he.

"A little

“A little while you may,” replied Monimia; “but speak low—I shall not do my millinery the worse for your sitting by me, if you will but be calm and reasonable.”

They then began to consult on the proposed meeting of the next day. Monimia trembled as it was talked of; yet pleasure was mingled with the apprehension with which she thought of being made acquainted with any of his relations, particularly with his beloved Selina, whom he represented as a second self. It was settled, after some little debate on the subject, that when every part of the family were engaged in the hall, Monimia should, at an hour fixed upon, find her way in the dark to the Study; not through the chapel, but by the usual way through the house; and that Selina should be brought there by her brother immediately afterwards, where they might remain half an hour unsuspected, and with much less hazard than in Monimia's room. This being arranged, Orlando entreated

reated her to spare herself as much as possible; and having extorted a promise from her, that when she found herself fatigued she would endeavour to sleep, he reluctantly left her.

C H A P. VIII.

MONIMIA, secure of the tenderest affection of her lover, bore, without more repining, the little hardships to which her situation exposed her :—but her mind looked forward, in mournful anticipation, to the time when she should no longer hear that soothing voice lending her courage against every transient evil ; no longer receive continual assurances of the ardour and generosity of his attachment ; and find in his disinterested love, his attentive friendship, sufficient consolation against her uncertain or uneasy destiny.

To obey him, was the first wish of her life ; she therefore endeavoured to drive from her mind the melancholy reflections that prevented her repose, and put off the
nothing

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finishing her work till the next day. As soon as it glimmered through her casement, she arose to her task ; which having soon finished, she awaited with a lightened heart the other orders of her aunt.

The whole house was in a bustle—and Mrs. Rayland not only in unusual health, but as anxious for the splendour and excellence of the entertainment, as if she had a deeper design than merely to outshine the newer elegancies of Carloraine Castle. All the operations of Mrs. Lennard and her attendants succeeded happily. By half after two all the guests were assembled : by half after three all the tables groaned under the weight of venison and beef. About seventy people were assembled in the hall. In the dining parlour the party consisted of General Tracy, who was placed at Mrs. Rayland's right hand ; on her left Mrs. Hollybourn, the wife of the archdeacon of that district, a lady of a most precise, and indeed formidable demeanour : opposite to her, and next to Mrs. Somerville, sat the Doctor himself, a dignified clergyman, of profound

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profound erudition, very severe morals, and very formal manners; who was the most orthodox of men, never spoke but in sentences equally learned and indisputable, and held almost all the rest of the world in as low estimation as he considered highly his own family, and above all himself.

Between her mother and Mr. Somerive, on the other side, was placed their only daughter and heiress, Miss Ann-Jane-Eliza Hollybourn, who, equally resembling her father and her mother, was the pride and delight of both: possessing something of each of their personal perfections, she was considered by them a model of loveliness; and her mind was adorned with all that money could purchase. The wainscot complexion of her Mother was set off by the yellow eyebrows and hair of the Doctor. His little pug nose divested of its mulberry hue, which, on the countenance of his daughter, was pronounced to be *le petit nez ret-cussé*, united with the thin lips drawn up to make a little mouth, which

were

were peculiar to "his better half," as he facetiously called his wife. The worthy archdeacon's short legs detracted less from the height of his amiable daughter, as she had the long waist of her mother, fine sugar-loaf shoulders that were pronounced to be *extremely genteel*, and a head which looked as if the back of it had by some accident been flattened, since it formed a perpendicular line with her back. To dignify with mental acquisitions this epitome of human loveliness, all that education could do had been lavished; masters for drawing, painting, music, French, and dancing, had been assembled around her as soon as she could speak; she learned Latin from her father at a very early period, and could read any easy sentence in Greek; was learned in astronomy, knew something of the mathematics, and, in relief of these more abstruse studies, read Italian and Spanish. Having never heard any thing but her own praises, she really believed herself a miracle of knowledge and accomplishments; and, it must be owned,

that

that an audience less partial than those before whom she generally performed, might have allowed that she performed very long concertos, and solos without end, with infinite correctness, and much execution. Then she made most inveterate likenesses of many of her acquaintance; and painted landscapes, where very green trees were reflected in very blue water. Her French was most grammatically correct, though the accent was somewhat defective; and she knew all manner of history—could tell the dates of the most execrable actions of the most execrable of human beings—and never had occasion to consult, so happy was her memory, Trusler's Chronology. As it was believed, so it was asserted by the Doctor and his wife, that their daughter was the most accomplished woman of her age and country; and by most of their acquaintance it was taken for granted. The gentlemen, however, whom all these elegancies were probably designed to attract, seemed by no means struck with them: some of them, who had approached her on

the suggestion of her being an heiress, had declared that her fortune made no amends for her want of beauty; and others had been alarmed by the acquisitions which went so much beyond those they had made themselves. Thus, at six and-twenty (though the lady and her parents, for some reasons of their own, called her no more than twenty-two), Miss Hollybourn was yet unmarried! for, of those lovers who had offered, some had been rejected by the Doctor, and some by herself. She affected a great indifference, and talked of the pleasures of pursuing knowledge in an elegant retirement. But it was observed, that whenever any young men of present fortune, or of future expectation, were in the country, Dr. Hollybourn's family returned the visits of the ladies to whom these gentlemen belonged, with unusual punctuality.

While they were in this part of the world, they always dined ~~once~~ or twice at Rayland Hall, where the Doctor was well received as a most pious, worthy man; his
Lady

Lady as a very good kind of woman, and Miss as a mighty pretty sort of a young person. Of late the whole family had risen into higher favour; for the Doctor was the only clergyman in the country around who had resisted the good entertainment so profusely given at Carloraine Castle, and had refused to visit a man who kept a mistress. He had even gone farther, and preached a sermon which all his congregation said pointed immediately at Mr. Stockton; but as Mr. Stockton did not hear it, and having heard it would not have cared for it, the reproof only edified his hearers, and raised the Doctor in the esteem of the Lady of the Hall.

The lower part of the table was filled by the four Miss Somervises and their two brothers; Orlando, at the request of Mrs. Rayland, taking his seat at the bottom.

The plenty and excellence of the table, which was furnished almost entirely from the park, farm, warren, gardens, and ponds of Rayland Hall, were highly commended by the guests, and by none with more zeal

than the General and the Doctor, who vied with each other in applying that sort of flattery of which their venerable hostess was most susceptible. The General spoke in terms of the highest respect of her ancient family, and of the figure made in history by the name of Rayland. The Doctor, while he did justice to the excellent dishes before him, launched out in very sincere praise of the domain which produced them: the beautiful park which, he averred, fed the very best venison in the country; the woods abounding in game; the extensive ponds, whose living streams contained all manner of fish; the rich, meadows below, that fattened such exquisite beef; the fine sheep walks on the downs above, which sent to table mutton that rivalled the Welch mutton itself!—then, such gardens for fruit! such convenient poultry yards!—Mrs. Rayland, who loved to hear her place praised, could have listened to such eulogiums for ever; and seemed totally to have forgotten that, according to the course of nature, she should be mistress of these goods

things but a very little time longer, and that, when a little space in the chancel of the adjoining church would be all she could occupy, they must pass into the possession of another.

Who that other was to be, appeared an enquiry which the Doctor had much at heart. From some late circumstances he had reason to suppose that Orlando would be the fortunate possessor of all the excellent accommodations which impressed him with so much veneration :—but he now saw the elder brother again received, and when he considered the advantages which primogeniture might give him in the mind of Mrs. Rayland, he doubted to which of the Sons it would be politic to pay court.

Some ideas were floating in his mind, that whichever of these young men became master of Rayland Hall, could not fail to be a very proper match for the most accomplished Miss Hollybourn. It was certain that he had always reckoned upon a title for her ; but such a deficiency might easily be made up by the successor to such

a fortune. What ~~is~~ easy as to change a name by the King's most gracious license, and to renew the old title of Baronet, which had been so long in the family?—Sir Philip Rayland! Sir Orlando Rayland!—either sounded extremely well. Both were very well looking young men, and the youngest remarkably handsome. The more the Doctor considered this project, the more feasible it appeared; and he now began to study the chances, which he thought he could do from Mrs. Rayland's behaviour.

A very little observation determined him in favour of Orlando. He saw that Mrs. Rayland seemed to look upon him as her son, while towards his brother her manners were cold and stately. When dinner was over, the gentlemen, after a short stay over their wine, followed the ladies to another apartment. General Tracy was, at the desire of Mrs. Rayland, shewn into the gallery of portraits by Orlando—and the young ladies, at the request of Miss Holbourn, who had never seen all the pictures

In the house, were permitted by their mother to be of the party; while Philip Somerville, who went out under pretence of accompanying them, slipped away as soon as he left the drawing-room, and went after his own imagination.

It was now dark, and these portraits were to be shewn by candle-light to General Tracy, who cared not a straw if the whole race of Raylands had been swept from the memory of mankind; though he had, partly by guess, and partly from recollection, been incessantly talking to Mrs. Rayland about the glory of her ancestors.—But this he perceived he had made a very unexpected progress in her favour; which he would by no means forfeit by shewing any indifference to her proposal of visiting the representations of the eminent men in whose praise he had been so eloquent. But a much stronger inducement was his hope to find an opportunity of speaking to Isabella, while he pretended to contemplate with admiration the picture of her great grandfather.

But this hope was rendered abortive by the presence of Miss Hollybourn, who leaning on Isabella's arm, continued to question Orlando as to the history of every portrait, and then made her remarks upon it—sometimes addressing herself to the General, and sometimes to Orlando, who were equally weary of her, and who would both have given the world for her absence; for Orlando dreaded her detaining him beyond the time that he had fixed for the meeting between his sister Selina and Monimia; and the General detested her for being in the way when he fancied he could otherwise, by some means or other, have enjoyed that notice from Isabella which he found it so very difficult to obtain in the house of Mr. Somerive; where, since he had spoke more plainly to her of his passion, she had not only shunned him, but had assured him that she would repeat his conversation to her father. Twice, therefore, he had been forced to apologize, and turn off his professions as a joke, because he could never find her long enough alone to allow

of

of his using those arguments that he thought would be successful; and he had been extremely solicitous to accept the invitation from Mrs. Rayland, because he hoped that in such a great house, in a day of universal festivity, such an opportunity would be found.

Miss Hollybourn, having sufficiently shewn her knowledge both in painting and history, and imagining her auditors were amazed and edified by both, requested to know if the house did not furnish many other portraits of remarkable persons, or pictures by eminent hands. Orlando answered coldly, that there were some in other parts of the house, but none particularly worthy her attention. She desired, however, he would have the goodness to shew her round that suit of rooms. It was the side of the house formerly set apart for company, but now was very rarely inhabited. The furniture was rich, but old fashioned:—the beds were of cut velvet or damask, with high testers, some of them with gilt cornices:—the chairs were worked, or of coloured velvets, fringed with silk

and gold, and had gilt feet :—fine japaned cabinets, beautiful pieces of china, glasses, and some valuable pictures, to be seen in every room, which, though now so rarely inhabited, were kept in great order ; and the oak floors were so nicely waxed, that to move upon them was more like skating than walking.

Miss Hollybourn had something to say on every object she beheld. One bespoke the grandeur, another the taste, a third the antiquity of the family who were owners of the mansion ; but still, among all this common-place declamation, it was easy to see that the most amiable moveable in it at present was, in her opinion, the handsome, interesting Orlando.

General Tracy, accustomed to study the fair, perceived this immediately. He perceived too, that Orlando disliked her as much as she seemed charmed with him, and that therefore this rich heiress would not be the means of preventing the plan they had in agitation from taking effect. He therefore ventured to say to him, when he had an opportunity as they descended.

ascended the great staircase—"You are a fortunate man, Sir!"

"Fortunate, Sir!" said Orlando, who had nothing in his head but his intended meeting with Monimia—"How do you mean fortunate?"

"Nay," replied the General, "most young men would, I believe, think it fortunate to be so highly approved of by such a young lady!"

"What lady, Sir!" cried Orlando, in increased alarm, and still thinking of Monimia.

"Miss Hollybourn," replied the General—"the accomplished Miss Hollybourn."

"Miss Hollybourn!" exclaimed Orlando with a contemptuous look; yet reflecting that he had no right to despise her, whether the General's conjecture was just or not, he added, "The approbation of *such* a young lady is certainly what I neither desire nor deserve."

This passed as they waited on the staircase.

case, while Miss Hollybourn explained to the two Miss Somerives the Loves of Cupid and Psyche, which were painted on the wall; though the picture was so little illuminated by the two wax-candles, carried by Orlando and a servant, that nothing but her passion to display her universal knowledge, could have induced her to attempt clearing up the obscurity in which the wavering and unequal light involved a story not very clearly told by the painter. At length the dissertation finished; and the whole party returned to the drawing-room, where they found the good Doctor had supported the conversation during their absence. In about half an hour afterwards Mr. Pattenfon came in great form to announce that the tenants were assembled in the hall, and requested to know if their Lady was well enough to oblige them with her presence during their first dance. This was the established etiquette. Mrs. Rayland answered, that she would be there; and then addressing herself to her company, she said,

said, "That it had always been her custom in the time of Sir Hildebrand, her father, to ~~go~~ down, with her dear deceased sisters, the first dance at the tenants' feast; that the custom had been long since laid aside; but if any of the friends whom I have now the pleasure of seeing assembled, will condescend to go down a dance with the tenantry and domestics———"

The General and the Doctor eagerly interrupted her—

"I am not a dancing man, Madam," cried the General: "I never was fond of dancing. How much I now, in looking at that beautiful group of young ladies, have cause to regret it! and much I shall envy the young men, who no doubt will take advantage of such an opportunity."

"I, Madam," cried the Doctor, quitting his seat and waddling to her, "am neither by nature or profession a dancing man, ~~but~~ to shew you how much I honour so excellent a custom, there is my substitute (pointing to his daughter), and I will venture ~~to say~~ that few men ever boasted a better."

Mrs.

Mrs. Rayland, then looking round the room, said, "Mr. Orlando Somerive, you will have the honour of beginning the dance with Miss Hollybourn."

Orlando, who would have heard of an impending earthquake with as much pleasure, hesitated, and said, "My brother, Madam—my brother has a superior claim to that happiness."

"No, no, child!" cried Mrs. Rayland; "not at all—you are, *as it were*, at home here, and therefore I will have you begin. Besides, I don't see your brother:—when he returns, he may take your eldest sister; and the two youngest ladies may dance together, for I suppose you will all choose to dance."

Mrs. Somerive assented for her daughters, and said, "Perhaps, Madam, Philip is already below."

"However that may be," replied Mrs. Rayland coldly, "it is quite time to begin; the people are, no doubt, impatient. Therefore, if you General Tracy, and you Dr. Hollybourn, and you Mr. Somerive,

will

will have the kindness to see the ladies to the hall, my people will help me thither in a few moments." ' "

The man of war, and the man of peace, now declared how happy they should esteem themselves to be permitted the honour of being her attendants; but she told them, only Pattenfon and Lennard had been used to it, and again desired they would conduct the other ladies. The General, under the cruel necessity of offering his hand to Mrs. Somerive, or Mrs. Hollybourn, cast a wistful look towards Isabella, and took the hand of the latter on seeing Mrs. Somerive conducted by the Doctor; while Orlando, with a heavy heart, led Miss Hollybourn, and his sisters followed. It was now within a quarter of an hour of the time that he had hoped to meet his Monimia; and he saw himself tied down to an engagement from which he feared there was little hope of escaping in time. Philip, to whom he most earnestly wished to transfer the little coveted honour designed him by his partner, appeared not; and poor Orlando stood awaiting

awaiting his arrival at the head of fifteen or sixteen couple who were going to dance, execrating his ill fortune, which seemed to have brought this odious heiress on purpose to disappoint him of the exquisite pleasure with which he had on this night fondly flattered himself—that of forming a lasting and tender friendship between the sister he so fondly loved, and his adored Monimia.

C H A P. IX.

AT length Mrs. Rayland was seated at the upper end of the hall, near the fire—the General placed himself by her, and the Doctor strutted round her—the other ladies were opposite; and the dance began.

Poor Orlando, whose heart beat not responsive to the music, made, however, an effort to conceal his vexation. His partner, who had learned for many years of the most celebrated master, exerted all her knowledge of the art, and displayed all her graces to attract him; while he, hardly conscious of her existence, proceeded mechanically in the dance; and so little penetration had the spectators, that his absence, or distaste to what he was about, was wholly unperceived, while Mrs. Rayland

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could not help observing to the Doctor how well Orlando performed—"Is he not," said she, "a fine young man?"

"Indeed he is, Madam," replied the Doctor, who had now the opening he so long wished for; "a very fine young man, I think;" and he became an inch higher as he spoke. "I think indeed that this island produces not a finer couple than *your* kinsman, Madam, and the *daughter* of your humble servant."

Mrs. Rayland, who loved not female beauty, whether real or imaginary, did not so warmly assent to this as the Doctor expected; who, not discouraged, squatted himself down in the place the General had that moment vacated (who could not forbear walking after Isabella down the dance), and thus proceeded:

"I assure you, dear Madam, I have often spoken most highly in praise of your sagacity and discernment in electing the young Orlando as your favourite and *protégé*. He is a fine young man—good, prudent and sensible; and, I am sure, grateful.

for your bounty. I dare say that he will do well; for, under your auspices, there are few men even of consideration and fortune, who, having daughters, would not be proud of an alliance with him."

Mrs. Rowland answered rather coldly, "I believe Mr. Orlando has no thoughts of marrying—He is yet too young."

"He is young, to be sure, Madam; but, for my own part, I must observe, that early marriages founded, as no doubt his would be, alike on prudence and inclination, generally turn out happily. As to my own girl, ur-
done as I and Mrs. Hollybourn must to be sure feel without her, I declare to you that, though she is so young, I should not hesitate to dispose of her to a man of even her own age, if I were convinced that he was a prudent, sober young man, unlike those sad examples of folly and extravagance that we see before our eyes every day; a young man who had had a virtuous education, which in my opinion is a private one; a young man of family and of good expectations. I say, Madam, that on such a one, though

though his present fortune be unequal to Miss Hollybourn's expectations, I should not hesitate, young as she is, and living as I do only by gazing on her, to bestow her with twenty thousand pounds down, and—I will say nothing of future expectations—I am, I bless the Father of all mercies, in a prosperous fortune—I have seventeen hundred a year in church preferment; my own property, which I have realised in land, is somewhat above twelve hundred. When I have given my girl her little marriage portion, I have still something handsome in the three per cents, and in India stock a trifle more. My brother-in-law, the bishop, has no children, and my daughter will inherit the greatest part of his fortune. So you see, Madam, that, to say nothing of her personal and mental accomplishments, which to be sure it ill becomes a *father* to insist upon—I say, reckoning only her pecuniary advantages, there are few better matches in England."

The Doctor, who knew that Mrs Rayland loved money, imagined she could not

fail of being attracted by this history of his wealth, nor misunderstand his meaning in giving it: but he had for once mistaken his ground. Mrs. Rayland, though she loved her own money, loved nobody the better for having or affecting to have as much. She knew that, rich as Doctor Hollybourn now was, he began his classical career as a servitor at Oxford; and that his "brother-in-law the bishop," from whose *nepotism* his wealth and consequence had been in great measure derived, was the son of an innkeeper. Though she always spoke highly of his piety, and his high-church principles, she had ever contemned his efforts to make himself be considered as a man of family: nor did she feel much disposed to encourage any scheme to make Orlando independent of her by marriage, still less an attempt to extort from her a decision concerning him; which, whatever her real sentiments might be, she was not of a temper to declare. For all these reasons she heard the conversation of Doctor Hollybourn very coldly, and only said;

• "that •

“that to be sure Miss was a very accomplished young lady; and, having such a fine fortune, might expect to marry in high life.”

Still the Doctor was not repulsed; and, fancying that he had not yet spoken plain enough, he went on to enlarge on his notions of happiness, and on his views for his daughter. High life, he said, in the common acceptation of the word, was not his ambition. It was real domestic happiness, and not unnecessary and unmeaning splendour, he desired for his dear girl—a good husband untainted with the vices and false philosophy of a dissolute age—an handsome country residence, where she might be received into an ancient and religious family—were rather his objects. “A title,” added he, “a title has its advantages no doubt, and especially if it be an ancient title, one that brings to the mind the deeds of the glorious defenders of our country—men who have shed their honourable blood in defence of the Church of England, and their King—who bled in the cause for which

Laud and his fainted master died ! When I hear such names, and see their posterity flourishing, I rejoice.—When I learn that such families, the honour of degenerate England, are likely to be extinct, my heart is grieved. And how should I be thankful, how feel myself elevated, if my daughter, marrying into such a family, should restore it, while my interest might obtain a renewal in her posterity of the fading honours of an illustrious race !”

This was speaking at once pompously and plainly. But Mrs. Rayland was more offended by the air of consequence assumed by the Doctor, than flattered by the fine things he said of her family ; and she so little concealed her displeasure, that Mrs. Somerive, long weary of the parading and supercilious conversation of Mrs. Holbybourn, and who saw, by the Doctor's frequently looking towards Orlando, that the discourse was about him, and that Mrs. Rayland was displeased with it, arose and came towards them : she said something to Mrs. Rayland merely with a view to break the

the discourse, which was, however, immediately done much better by the General, who, afraid of being too particular, now left Isabella; and returning to the seat Doctor Hollybourn had seized, he cried, "Come, come, my good Doctor, we soldiers are a little proud of our favour with the ladies, and we do not patiently see ourselves displaced by you churchmen. I shall not relinquish my seat by my excellent hostess."

The Doctor then got up; and fancying, from the softness and sweetness of Mrs. Somerive's manner, that he should in her meet a willing auditor, and perhaps the very best he could find for a scheme which acquired every moment new charms in his imagination, he asked if he should attend her to the other end of the room to look at the dancers; to which, as she was extremely restless and uneasy by the long absence of her eldest son, whom she every moment hoped to see enter, she readily assented.

The General then took possession of the post the Doctor had quitted; and being

more—

more used to every kind of approach, he made infinitely more progress with Mrs. Rayland, in obtaining her consent to Orlando's entering the army, than the Doctor had effected for his scheme, notwithstanding the splendour of his fortune, the accomplishments of his daughter, or his mention of "his brother the bishop."

In the mean time the poor young man, who was rendered by Mrs. Raylands favour an object sought for by the divine, and by his own spirit an object of dread to the soldier, was half distracted, and knew not what he was about. It was now past the hour when he had promised Morimia to bring Selina to her; for, not expecting the unwelcome addition of the Holybourn family, he concluded that, after going down a dance with one of the buxom daughters of the principal tenant, he could have slipped away at the end of it; and whispering his mother that he was going to shew Selina some of his drawings, and how he had ornamented his little tapestry room, that he might account for her absence, he

should have had an uninterrupted hour with his most beloved sister and his Monimia.

Instead of this he now found himself fixed for the whole night to Miss Hollybourn; who had already declared that she found herself in such a humour for dancing, and that really the whole set was so much more tolerable than she expected, that she should not very soon wish to sit down. Poor Orlando, who had no excuse to offer for quitting her, had no hope but in the arrival of his brother, to whom he flattered himself he might resign this unenvied honour at least for one dance: but even this hope was very uncertain; for Philip might perhaps return no more to the room, or if he did, might be unwilling to accept the felicity of dancing with Miss Hollybourn, for he was not of a humour to put himself out of the way for any one; and, as he very seldom danced at all, would now, if he did join the dancers, much more probably select for his partner one of the handsome daughters

daughters of the tenants, with whom he could be more at home.

Thus the time which Orlando expected to have passed in so different a manner wore away. In vain he looked towards the door—no brother arrived to succour him. The second dance was already at an end; and Isabella, who had, with her mother's permission, accepted the hand of a rich young farmer, while Selina and Emma danced together, had already called a third, and was flying down with a spirit and gaiety which quite enchanted her ancient lover; while Orlando, who on account of Miss Hollybourn still kept a place near the top, was preparing with an heavy heart to follow her, when his father, with an expression of extreme concern on his countenance, approached, and asked him if he knew where his brother was?

“No, Sir, indeed I do not,” answered Orlando; “I cannot even guess—but, for God’s sake, give me leave to go look for him. I see you are very uneasy at his absence.”

"I am indeed," replied Mr. Somerive, "and your mother much more so."

"Let me go, dear Sir, then," said Orlando eagerly.

"No, no," answered his father:—"Go down this dance, and take no notice—if then he does not come, go see if you can find him. I have been in search of him myself; but to no purpose. I fancied he might be in your room. I went to the library door, for I could have sworn I heard somebody walking there; but the door was locked, and I called and knocked at it in vain. If Philip was there, he had some reason—no good one, I fear—for not answering."

Orlando, now ready to sink into the earth, yet unable to fly from his intolerable task, began the dance, after having been twice called upon by his partner; but thinking only of the terror Monimia must have been in, while, shut up in the library, she heard his father at the door, and overwhelmed with vexation at being thus detained from her, he could no longer command

mand that portion of attention that was requisite even to the figure of the dance. But having blundered four or five times, turned the wrong women, and run against the men, then missed his time, and put everybody out, he said in a hurrying way to Miss Hollybourn, who began to be much discomposed by his mistakes—"I really beg a thousand pardons; but Isabella's dance is so extremely difficult I cannot go down it—I shall only distress you, Madam, by my blunders; had we not better go to the bottom?"

"Dear Sir," cried the lady bridling, "I can find no such difficulty in it. If you would only take the trouble to attend a moment, I am sure I could explain it to you so that you *could* not make a mistake.—Now only observe—We first pass between the second and third couples—and I lead out the two gentlemen, and you the two ladies—then meet and *allemande*—then *le moulin* at bottom—then I turn the third gentleman—then you——"

Orlando, unable to command himself,
 . K 3 . said,

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said, still more confusedly, "No, upon my honour, I shall never do it. I am very sorry to disappoint you, Madam; and wish I could for this dance recommended you another partner." He then bowed, and was walking away, when she bounced after him.

"You don't imagine there is any other person here," cried she, biting the end of her fan—"I hope you don't imagine there is any body else here, with whom I shall dance!"

"Pardon me, Madam," said Orlando, taking her hand; "here is my elder brother, who has even a better right to that honour than I have." At this moment his eyes were gratified by the sight of Philip, to whom he, without waiting for Miss Hollybourn's answer, led her, and cried, "Dear Phil, here am I in the most awkward distress imaginable; Miss Hollybourn wishes to dance this dance down, and I am so stupid I cannot do the figure. I am sure you will be very happy to supply my place."

Philip, who was never much disposed to
sacrifice.

sacrifice his own pleasure to the gratification of others, and who had schemes of his own on foot, answered with less than his usual ceremony (for he was never more polite for having drank a good deal) :

“ A-hey, Sir Rowland ! who told you so ? How the devil should I, who am no dancer, execute what is too difficult for so perfect a caperer as thou art—Sir Knight ? ”

Mortified beyond endurance at being thus rejected, Miss Hollybourn, disengaging her hand with an angry jerk from Orlando’s, said haughtily—“ Pray, Mr. Orlando, spare yourself this trouble ; I am content to sit still.” She then walked away ; and Orlando, not giving himself time to consider what he did, said in a whisper to Philip—“ If you have any compassion, my dear Phil, take her for this dance—I will be grateful, believe me, and I will not desire to punish you with her above half an hour.”

“ D—n her, a little carrotty, pug-nosed moppet ! ” cried Philip, “ as ugly and as

insolent as the devil—why should I take the trouble to humour her?”

“It will oblige me beyond expression,” answered Orlando; “it will oblige my father and mother.”

Philip just then recollecting, that he was upon his good behaviour, agreed, though with an ill grace; and Orlando eagerly carrying him up to Miss Hollybourn, who sat fanning herself and swelling at the top of the room, began a speech, in which he blundered worse than he had done in dancing; but Philip took it out of his hands, and said—“Madam, I am so much in an habit, in *this* house, of giving the *pas* to my brother here, Sir Rowland, that I really dared not aspire to the honour of your fair hand till I perfectly understood that he had relinquished it for the present dance; but as he has now explained himself, if you will allow me the bliss of being his double, I will acquit myself to the best of my poor abilities; and if you, charming Miss Hollybourn, will deign to instruct me, you shall find, that
under

under so lovely a preceptress I shall make up in docility for deficiency of practice."

Miss Hollybourn had so little natural sense among all her acquirements, that this speech, which from its substance, and still more from the manner of its delivery, was evidently meant in ridicule, seemed to her to be very polite, and made very much in earnest. She therefore, casting a look towards Orlando, much less sweet than those she had favoured him with towards the beginning of the evening, assented with a smirk to the proposal of his brother—and immediately joined the dancers; while Orlando, trembling lest some new interruption should again deprive him of the sight of Monimia, hastened to find Selina, to whom he beckoned, and whispered to her to come round another way, where he would meet her, that their going out together might not be remarked. He changed his mind about speaking to his mother, fearing lest she should propose going too, if the object was only to shew Selina his room; and he thought it better to risk an

enquiry after Selina, which perhaps might not be made, or, if it were, might easily be answered.

It was the custom on these occasions for the inferior servants not to come into the hall till the Lady and her company, if she happened to have any, were withdrawn. When the business of the dinner and tea tables was over, they became spectators from a railed gallery, which over the entrance to the hall made a communication between the principal apartments above. Here the upper house-maid, the footmen, and the cook had been stationed—Betty, most superb in red ribbands, not quite so long as the rest.

Monimia had been forbidden by Mrs. Lennard to appear at all during any part of the evening; an injunction which she was not at all disposed to disobey. She was far, therefore, from envying Betty, who came into her room all in a flutter, as soon as she was dressed, to shew her finery, and descant on the pleasure she expected in dancing when Madam was gone, and the gossamer-folks, and boasting how many solicitations

citations she had already had from the young men. Monimia, glad to get her out of the room, thought only of fulfilling her engagement with Orlando, and of the pleasure and comfort of being made known to one of his sisters; yet her timidity and diffidence made her fear this interview as much as she wished it. Unconscious of the interesting sweetness of her countenance, and the simple graces of her form, she feared lest Selina might think her brother's affection ill placed, and blame his attachment to an object of so little merit. Under these impressions, she would have given herself all the advantages that dress afforded; but her scanty wardrobe left her very little choice, and she had no means of varying her appearance from what it usually was—a white muslin gown being the utmost of her finery. She took care, however, to dispose her hair in the most becoming manner she could; and having finished her little toilet, she descended with a palpitating heart and a light step to the part of the house through which she was to

pass in going to the Study. 'It was now empty, for all the servants were in the gallery, waiting the departure of their Lady, to join the festivity of the night; and Monimia glided through the north wing, which was never at any time inhabited, and without any misadventure reached the Study, where she waited in trembling suspense the arrival of Orlando and Selina.

Every body being engaged in the middle of the house, that part of it was as silent as if there was no bustle in the other, except the distant sound of the music in the great hall, to which Monimia, with the door of the Study ajar, involuntarily listened; when she was suddenly alarmed by a voice in the adjoining parlour, talking and laughing, and apparently romping, and a man's voice answering in a half whisper, and begging of the first person, whom she knew to be Betty, to be more quiet. As her being discovered in Orlando's Study would have ruined her peace for ever, she shut to the door as softly as she could, and turned the key. The conversation
between

between the two people without appeared to be so animated, that she flattered herself they did not hear her; but as she still remained listening at the door, hardly daring to breathe, her terror was increased by hearing them approach and attempt to open it. "Egad! it is locked," cried a voice which Monimia then first discovered to be young Somerive:—"Does Sir Rowland always lock his door?"

"Generally he does," replied the other, "but I dare say among the house keys there's one that will open it—yet, hang it, don't let us try. He'll come perhaps, and that you know will be very disagreeable."

"He come!" said Philip—"No, no, he's safe enough—He dares as well jump into the fire as quit the post where the old woman has placed him—Come, come—see if there's no other key will open this door. Besides, as to his coming, what should he come here for? 'Tis more likely, if he can get away, he'll go to visit Miss in the turret."

"Lord!" cried Betty, "how you have
that

that notion stuffed into your head—when I tell you again and again, he no more meets Miss, as you calls her, than the child unborn. Sure I should know——She! a poor innocent silly thing! I don't believe he takes any account of her——But hush! Oh gemini! who's there?"

The voice of the elder Somerive was now heard, calling aloud in the passage leading to the parlour they were in for his eldest son. "Philip!" cried he, "Philip! —where are you?"

"'Tis my father," said Philip—"Can not we get out without meeting him?"

"Oh yes," replied Betty; "follow me, and don't speak for all the world."

She then opened another door which led out into the garden, which, as Orlando usually came in that way, was seldom locked; and as all this had passed in the dark, they glided away unperceived—not a moment however before Mr. Somerive, entering with a candle the room they had quitted, gave a new alarm to the terrified Monimia. Mr. Somerive, who had heard the

footsteps of the fugitives as they left the parlour, imagined somebody was walking in the Study—He therefore tried the door, on the other side of which poor Monimia still stood trembling, and again loudly called on Philip Somerive; entreating him, if he was there, to answer him, and representing all the ill consequences of his thus disappearing abruptly, after having been received into an house where he had before given offence, but where it was so material for him to be thought well of. No answer however was returned; and at length Monimia heard Mr. Somerive close his fruitless remonstrance with a deep sigh, and depart.

These repeated alarms now seemed to subside, and a dead-silence ensued, but still Orlando came not.—Monimia, not daring to have a candle lest the light should be discerned under the door, sat down in the window-seat which was the nearest to it to listen for his arrival, though doubting from what his brother had said whether he would arrive at all. The large old library, half
6 furnished

furnished with books and half hung with tapestry, and where the little light afforded by a waning moon gleamed faintly through the upper parts of the high casements which the window-shutters did not reach, was perhaps the most gloomy apartment that fancy could imagine. Monimia looked round her, and shuddered—The affright she had undergone in the chapel, though it was explained, still dwelt upon a mind which had so early been rendered liable to the terrors of superstition; and she looked towards the door that opened to the passage of the chapel, fancying some hideous spectre would appear at it: or she reasoned herself out of such an idea, only to give way to one more horrid; and figured to herself that the ruffian whom Orlando had described to her, and whose name was held in dread by the whole country, might enter at it as he had once done before. Against this apprehension she might have been secured by satisfying herself that the door was locked; but she had not courage to cross the room.

Sitting

Sitting, therefore and listening to every sound, she again distinguished the music in the great hall, which, as the wind swelled or fell, floated through the rest of the house; and she could not help contrasting that scene of festive mirth with her dark and gloomy solitude:—"How happy," said she, "are the Miss Somerives, and this other young lady! They, under the sanction of their parents, are gaily enjoying an innocent and agreeable amusement; while I, a poor unprotected being, wander about in darkness and in dread, and, though I do nothing wrong, undergo the terrors and alarms of guilt.—But, do I not act wrong? Alas! I am afraid I do—It *must* be wrong to carry on a clandestine correspondence, to meet by stealth a young man whom his friends would discard were they to know he met me at all.—It must surely be wrong to incur imputations from which, if once they are believed, it is impossible I can ever be vindicated—wrong to let Orlando hazard, for me, the loss of Mrs. Rayland's favour—and wrong to put myself in the way

of

of being believed no better than the servant, of whose light conduct I have seen so many instances, besides that which this moment happened, of her privately meeting Mr. Philip Somerive. How could I bear to be thought of by others as I think of her! and yet I seem to act as culpably. Oh Orlando! surely if you thought of this, you, who are so generous, so anxious for my happiness, would never expose me to it. Yet we must meet thus, or never meet at all!—and could I bear to be deprived of seeing him for the little, the very little time that is yet to pass before he is sent from hence—never—never perhaps to return?”

This sad idea filled her eyes with tears; and she was not recovered from the agony into which it threw her, when she again heard footsteps in the parlour—Somebody trode lightly along. Monimia listened, and fancied there was more than one person—Immediately the lock was turned; and the door being fastened, a voice, which she recognised with joy for that of Orlando, said,

in

in a half-whisper: "Monimia! are you not there? It is Selina and I—open the door therefore without apprehension."—Monimia remembered, with affright, that the voices of the two brothers bore a great resemblance to each other, and she again hesitated. But Orlando speaking louder, and her recollecting that his brother could not know that Selina was to accompany him, she, though with trembling apprehension, turned the key, and Orlando and his sister appeared.

"Let me," cried he, as he put Monimia into the arms of Selina—"let me unite in bonds of everlasting friendship the two loveliest and most beloved of beings!" Selina tried to say, "Whoever is dear to Orlando is so to me, and I rejoice in thus being allowed to say so." But, though she had innocently studied the sentence, she was too much confused to make it articulate; and Monimia was quite unable to speak at all. In a moment, however, Orlando, attempting to hide the uneasy flutter of his own thoughts, approached them with
a candle

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a candle which he had lit at the embers of his fire ; and, reminding them how short their interview must be, bade them both sit down—"and let us," added he, "endeavour to enjoy moments so brief and so precious."

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

SELINA, as timid, and almost as new to the world as Monimia herself, was too much terrified at the risk Orlando ran, and at what she herself hazarded, to be soon composed. She could hardly, indeed, have been in greater trepidation had she escaped from the company to have met a lover of her own. Her eyes, however, were occupied in examining the face and figure of Monimia; and no feminine envy induced her to deny the existence of that beauty or sweetness of which Orlando had said so much. She even thought Monimia more lovely than her brother had described her, yet she saw her to little advantage; for, the alarming situation she had been in for almost an hour and a half, the apprehension lest Orlando should not come, the reflection,

reflections which arose while she waited for him, and the emotion with which she now for the first time beheld his sister, had robbed her fair cheeks of their tender bloom; her eyes were swollen, and her voice was faltering and faint. Orlando seated her near Selina, and, sitting down by them, threw one arm round each of them; and, looking with a smile on both, said, “Why, what silent girls you are!—Selina! is it thus you greet your new friend? You who will talk to me of her for an hour, and never ceased soliciting of me to contrive this unhoped for meeting?—And you, Monimia! Come, come, I must have you more conversable.—Let us consider, my dear girls, how you may meet hereafter; for, without accomplishing that, the present meeting will only serve to tantalize us all.

The tears, which she had for a moment restrained, again filled the eyes of Monimia.—But, turning them tenderly on Orlando, she sighing said, “Ah! how can I hope your sister Selina, amiable and indulgent as she seems, will again incur, for me, hazard
which

which I see now makes her tremble, and fears which I myself can hardly endure?—Indeed, Orlando, if you did but know what I have suffered since I waited here in expectation of your coming!”——“I know it,” cried Orlando, imagining she alluded to his father’s having been at the door of the Study——“But luckily you had taken the precaution to lock the door; which I, little suspecting that this part of the house would be visited, had neglected to desire. So, as my father neither saw nor suspected any thing but that my brother was in this room, there is no harm done, nor any thing to fear.”

Monimia sighed, but thought it was improper, before Selina, to repeat the dialogue that she had heard between Mr. Philip Somerive and his female companion. She was far, however, from believing there was nothing to fear; and their short conference was to her embittered with the dread of a discovery, which she could not conquer. Selina, trusting to the judgment of her brother, and desirous of oblig-

ing

ing him, succeeded better in conquering the restraint she had at first felt; and, charmed with the voice, the manner and person of Monimia, she eagerly entered into his views, and talked over the means by which they might sometimes meet, if, as was too probable, invincible obstacles continued to be opposed to their seeing each other by the consent of Mr. and Mrs. Somerive—that of Mrs. Rayland could not be asked, and that of Mrs. Lennard they were sure would not be granted.

In this conversation Orlando spoke of what was to happen when he was gone, in terms that signified how certain he was that he should go. Monimia's heart sunk as he repeated, "When I am not here, I cannot see that there can be any objection to your openly seeing my sisters."—"Alas!" thought she, "what wretched company shall we then be to each other! yet to see the sisters of Orlando will always be a comfort to me." Selina too heard with extreme pain the frequent mention he made of his departure; and having, from many obser-

vations

vations she had made on the behaviour of General Tracy, during his residence of almost five weeks in her father's house, conceived a very unfavourable opinion of him—her dislike amounted almost to detestation when she considered him as being the principal mover of the plan which was thus to rob her of her beloved brother. Whatever she thought of his conduct in other respects, she had the prudence to keep to herself, and affected to dislike him only on account of Orlando.

Among the various little schemes which were considered for the future acquaintance of Selina and Monimia, none seemed sufficiently safe to be adopted without farther consideration; but Orlando promised to think of them all, and to acquaint them both with the result of his reflections. It was by this time necessary to part—Orlando proposed leading his sister back to the room, and carrying her immediately to his mother, to tell her that she had been in his apartment, that any surprise excited by her absence might be ended without farther

enquiry ; while Monimia hoped to find her way back to her own room, as safely as she had before traversed the house in her way from it.

They were then reluctantly bidding adieu, when they were thunderstruck by an attempt from without to force open the door. Orlando, thrown for a moment entire-ly off his guard, turned pale ; and, casting towards Monimia a look of anguish and terror, he cried, “ Who can it be ? what shall we do ? ”—The tender timid Monimia had at this instant more presence of mind than he had : “ Let me go,” said she, “ into your bed-chamber—there I can lock myself in : then ask who it is ; and, if it is one who has a right to enquire into your actions, open the door, and let him see you are sitting here with your sister.” There was not a moment to deliberate, for the person without still tried to open the door. Orlando waved his hand to Monimia to execute her project :—she glided away, and shut after her the door, which was hung on both sides with tapestry and

shut.

shut without noise, while Orlando demanded, in a loud and angry voice, who was at the door, and what was their business? At first a feigned voice answered, "Open the door, good friends, and you shall know our business." Orlando answered, "I shall not open it till I know to whom;"—and then a violent burst of laughter discovered it to be Philip—who cried, "Soho! have I caught you, Sir Roland? Is this my good, pious and immaculate brother?" "What folly is this!" said Orlando angrily as he opened the door—"and is it not strange that I cannot sit a moment in my own room with Selina, but you must break in upon us like a drunken constable?" "Gently, Sir Knight!" answered Philip Somerive as he staggered into the room—"fair and softly, if you please! no hard words to your elders, most valorous chevalier!—Selina is it?—By this light so it is! Well—I did not think, my good brother, you were so eager to put off your precious bargain upon me, *only* for the pleasure of a *tête-à-tête* with our little simple Selina. I thought you had

very different game in view—Egad, I'm not clear now that I have been mistaken—Heh, child !” added he turning to Selina, “ are you very sure you are not a blind ? why, my dear little whey face, what makes you look so pale ?” . .

“ Your strange behaviour, brother,” said Selina, who tried to collect spirit enough to speak without betraying the agitation she was thrown into. “ Come, come, child !” replied he, “ lectured as I am on all hands, I shall not let babes and sucklings preach to me. Your mamma, miss, won't be very well pleased, I can tell you, if she does not find you with the other misses ; they are just going away, I believe. The old woman is gone up to her apartment, and the misses are ordered off. There's the General, like my mother's gentleman-servant, hunting the fair bewy together, and there will be a hue and cry after you in a moment.”—“ Very well !” answered Selina ; “ Mamma will not be angry when she knows I am only with Orlando.” “ And I,” said Orlando, “ shall take care of her back ;
therefore

therefore you need not, Philip, be under any concern about her."

"Well, then," cried this tormentor, "as I am cursed tired, my dear knight, and have got a devilish headach, prihee, when thou art gone, lend me thy apartment for half an hour's quiet. I've promised George Green and half a dozen more of them, to meet them by and by in Pattenfon's room; and make out the night according to good old custom; and if I get a nap while the sober party, the cats and their kittens, are trundling off, I shall escape all the plaguy formality of "Wish you good night, dear ma'am!—hope you'll catch no cold!—I shall be glad to hear you got home safe!—most agreeable evening indeed!—wish we may meet here this time twelvemonth!"—and such mawkish cant; and I shall be as fresh as morning to meet the good fellows by and by—So, come, Sir Rowly, lend me your bed for a little. I'll send in pretty Betty," added he leering, "to make it for you before you come to bed."

Orlando, fearing, from this strange proposal, his brother was aware how impossible it was for him to grant it, now looked more confused than ever, and said very peevishly, "You are so drunk now, Philip, that it will be much wiser and more decent for you to go home directly—I at least will have nothing to do with your stay. Come, Selina, let us go—Philip, I will follow you."

"No, indeed you will not!" replied he, setting himself down by the fire. "If you won't lend me your bed, you will at least let me have a chair."

"I will leave nobody in my room," said Orlando warmly.

"What! hast got any bank-notes? has thy old weman given thee a little hoard? Egad she has!—I've a good mind to rummage, that I may know what brotherly help thou couldst give in case of a bad run."

"This is insupportable!" cried Orlando :
—"What shall I do with him?" whispered he to Selina. Poor Selina, unable to advise, was in as great consternation as the

half-distracted Orlando, who walked about the room a moment, considering by what means he could disengage himself from this troublesome visitor; but unable to think of any, he was beginning, in mere despair, to expostulate with him anew, when the approach of other persons was heard in the parlour; and Mr. Somerive himself, apparently in great displeasure, entered the Library.

“Orlando!” cried he, “Philip! Selina! what is all this? to what purpose are ye all here?—Selina; your mother is much amazed at your absence.

Orlando, then collecting his scattered thoughts, related, that he had merely brought Selina thither for a few moments to shew her his apartments, which she had never seen; and that while they were sitting quietly together, Philip, “whose situation, Sir, you see,” said he, “came in, and I could not prevail upon him to leave us, or to suffer us to return altogether to the company.”

• Mr. Somerive, now speaking with an air

of authority and concern to his eldest son, received only an account of his request to Orlando, which, he insisted upon it, "was a very reasonable one. " You are indeed," said his father, " fit only to go to bed ; but it must not be in Mrs. Rayland's house—you must come, Sir, with me."

Young Somerive then arose to obey ; for his father, when he was present, and had resolution to be peremptory, still retained some power over him. He staggered however so much that he was unable to proceed. Mr. Somerive bade Orlando assist him, which he was willing enough to do ; but as Philip leaned upon him he whispered, " Sir Knight ! if I can give the reverend senior the slip, I will still have my nap, and finish the evening with those joyous souls ; d—me if I don't !"

This threat terrified Orlando more than ever ; he knew how likely it was to be executed ; and therefore, in the hope that he might be able presently to return and release Monimia, whose longer absence from her room might be attended with the most alarming

alarming consequences, he hastily determined to lock the Study door, and thus convince his brother that his scheme of returning thither, to which he saw he adhered either with the stupid obstinacy of intoxication, or disguising, under its appearance, knowledge more destructive, was impracticable. He therefore, as soon as they were all out of the room, locked the door, and, saying aloud he had done so, he proceeded before his father, with a candle in his hand, to the apartment where Mrs. Rayland, much fatigued with the exertions of the evening, was taking leave of her guests. Philip, who seemed by no means in a condition to appear before her, had been consigned, in ~~the~~ this way, to the care of one of the men-servants, who had seated him by the fire in a passage-parlour, where he was in a few moments fast asleep.

Mrs. Somerive, to whom Selina's absence was easily accounted for, gently chid her for not saying whither she was going; and the long ceremonies of good-night on all hands being at length over, Orlando

handed to her coach the nymph whom he had, in her opinion, so ungallantly forsaken. He found her so much hurt at being made over to his brother, who probably had not acquitted himself to her satisfaction, that he found it necessary to apologize, at which however he was extremely awkward, assuring her, with much hesitation, that he was not aware that she would so soon quit the dancing-room, and that he flattered himself with the expectation of being honoured with her hand in a dance, where he could acquit himself in a manner more worthy so excellent a partner.

The Lady received his excuses with coldness and disdain; but the Doctor, who heard, seemed more willing to accept them in good part. "I never suspected, Sir," cried the consequential Divine, "that, with your understanding, you could fail to appreciate the Lady whose hand you held—It is not the fond partiality of the father, but common candour, which leads me to say, that of equals she has few in merit, superiors none. I hope we shall meet here again, Mr. Or-

lande.

land; and that we shall see you, with good Mr. and Mrs. Somerive, and their fine family, at Combe-Park. Good Mrs. Rayland, I heartily hope, that most worthy lady, who bears her years surprisingly well, will be able, before the winter's rigorous advances lay an embargo on valetudinarians; I say, I hope my excellent old friend will fix on some day to grace our poor abode, and sacrifice with us to the hospitable duties."

Orlando bowed his assent to a speech which he began to fear would last all night. —No effort of his, however, could have stopped the stream of the Doctor's eloquence, when once it began to flow; but fortunately Mrs. Hollybourn found it cold, and said peevishly, "Dear Doctor! you keep Ann in a thorough air—Pray consider—she has been dancing, and I tremble for the effects of such a current of air——"

Blessings on your care! thought Orlando, who was in the most extreme uneasiness all this time, lest Monimia, who he knew could not escape from his room, should be

missed in her own. The parade, however, that was yet made before this family were seated in their carriage, took up several minutes more; and even when Orlando had at length the satisfaction to see them driven from the door, he was compelled to attend to the disposal of his father, his mother, his four sisters, and the General, who could not for some time settle how they should return—the General being solicitous to take two of the young ladies in his post chaise; to which Mrs. Somerive very peremptorily objected, to the amazement of her husband, who, not having the least idea of her motives, cried, “ Bless me, my dear! it will be better surely to put any two of the girls under the care of General Tracy, than to crowd him with me and Philip, who, if we can find him, is not, I fear, in a state to travel without incommoding his companions.”—“ Well, then,” replied Mrs. Somerive, frightened at having said more than she intended, “ I will have the pleasure of going in the General’s carriage, and Emma can sit between us with-
out

out inconvenience." In this arrangement the General was obliged to acquiesce, and even to appear pleased with it, though it baffled the schemes he had been laying the whole evening. This second carriage then departed; and now Orlando, who could well have left his sisters in the care of his father, would have flown to his imprisoned Monimia—But a new difficulty arose: his brother, for whom search had been making, as well in the room where he had been left sleeping, as in every other part of the house that had been opened for company, was no-where to be found.

The Somerive family had all taken their leave of Mrs. Rayland, and waited in a parlour near the hall. Mr. Somerive now expressed great alarm at the ill success of those inquiries that had been made after his eldest son. "Perhaps, Sir," said Orlando—"perhaps my brother, finding himself, when he awoke, unfit to appear, is gone home on foot." Orlando had indeed very different conjectures; and, in the whole tenor of his behaviour that evening, found

found reason to fear that he had but too positive information relative to Monimia, and was determined to detect her. This apprehension, and the dread of her being missed by her aunt, who would in all probability visit her room as soon as the company were dispersed, gave to Orlando's manner such wildness and confusion as increased the distress of his father. Orlando repeated, "I am persuaded, Sir, Philip is gone home—I dare say you may yourself return quite easy."

"Are you so easy yourself then?" answered Mr. Somerive—"I think not, Orlando, from your countenance. Even admitting that my son has walked homeward, and will not commit any impropriety which shall expose him, or injure him in the opinion of Mrs. Rayland, is there nothing to fear for the safety of a man who has such a road to travel, in such a state?"

"Let me, Sir, go then, and seek for him on that road; and do you, I entreat you, return home and make yourself easy. A longer delay will not only alarm my mother,

ther,

ther, "but occasion enquiries on the part of Mrs. Rayland, who will probably hear of it by her servants ;—nor can it indeed answer any purpose, since every search that can be made has already been made within the house."

"Have you the key of your own apartment?"

"I have, Sir," replied Orlando, trembling lest his father was about to ask for it. "I locked the door of the Study when we all left it together."

"He cannot therefore be there," said Mr. Somerive, musing—"I cannot conjecture where he can be!"

"Pray, Sir," cried Orlando, "pray be composed, and suffer me to go the park-way homeward—I am persuaded my brother is safe."

"He does not indeed," said Mr. Somerive with a deep sigh—"he does not deserve the solicitude I feel for him. Orlando, on you I depend for finding and conducting him home."

Orlando solemnly assured his father and
his

his sisters that he would do so; and as their remaining longer at the Hall contributed nothing towards relieving their uneasiness, they at length determined to go.

When they were gone, Orlando hoped that the alarms of the night were over, and that Mrs. Lennard, as the stepants and all the servants were still dancing in the hall, would not have time to think of the usual ceremony of locking Monimia's door at ten o'clock. It was now however twelve.

With a palpitating heart then he went to find her. She was still locked in his bed-chamber, where, half distracted by fears of every kind, she had had sufficient time to reflect on all the hazards she incurred by these clandestine meetings with Orlando; and sometimes determined, if she escaped detection this time, never to be prevailed upon to venture it again.—Then the sad recollection, that he would soon cease to ask it, and that, if she did not meet him thus, she must relinquish the pleasure of ever speaking to him at all, shook the resolution which fear and prudence united to produce;

produce ;—and she almost wished, dreadful as it would at the moment be, that a discovery might compel them to the expedient Orlando once named—that of their flying together, and trusting to Providence for the rest. . .

C H A P. XI.

ORLANDO found Monimia alarmed and dejected ; but hardly giving himself time to re-assure her, and account for his long absence, he besought her to hasten to her room—" I hope," said he, " and believe the house is quite uninhabited on this side still, for all the servants are in the hall, & My brother is missing, and I have promised my father to find him and conduct him home. What a task ! for I know not where to look for him : not a moment must be lost, since my family are in such cruel alarms. However, I will wait here, my Monimia, till I think you are safe in your turret, and then set out—Know not whither—on this search."

Monimia hastened to do as he desired.

" But.

"But is Betty," said she, "in the hall? I have reasons, which I have not now time to explain, for believing they are together."

"I know not," answered Orlando, whose fears every moment increased; "I care not what happens if you are but once in safety."

Monimia then with light and timid steps passed through the adjoining parlour. She found all that end of the house deserted, and regained the long passage which led from her turret to the apartment of her aunt. All was quiet; and she flattered herself that Mrs. Lennard, occupied by the attention necessary to be shewn to the guests, had for once omitted the ceremony of locking the doors of that part of the house, and particularly hers, at the usual hour. In this hope she tripped along the passage, and had just reached the door of her own room, when Mrs. Lennard, with a candle in her hand, appeared at the other end. There was no hope of escape—She stood trembling, unable to open the lock, which she held in her hand; while her aunt
with

with a hasty step and an angry countenance advanced towards her—"Hey-day, Madam!" cried Mrs. Lennard, "pray, what makes you here? so dressed too, I assure you! I thought I had ordered you not to leave your room. Pr'ythee, Miss, where have you been? and how have you dared to disobey my orders?"

"Dear aunt," cried the affrighted Monimia, in a voice almost inarticulate through fear—"Dear aunt! be not so very angry—Every year till now you were so good as to give me leave to go into the hall-gallery to look at the dancers for a quarter of an hour. I dressed myself in hopes that some time in the evening I should see you to ask leave—it grew very late, you did not come to my room, and so——"

"And so, hussy, you left it without, did you?"—Monimia, unwilling to advance another direct falsehood, remained silent; and Mrs. Lennard, fixing her fierce enquiring eyes upon her, said sternly, "Monimia, there is something in your conduct which I do not understand—I suspect that
you

you are a very wicked girl—I have had hints given me more than once, that you are imposing upon me, and ruining yourself."

"How can I impose upon you, Madam?" said Monimia, who, believing the crisis of her fate was now approaching, tried to collect a little spirit—"How can I impose upon you? Do you not always confine me to my room, and have I any means of leaving it without your consent?"

"That is what I am determined to discover," cried Mrs. Lennard—(Monimia became paler than before)—"You have a false key, or you have some other means of getting out—However, it is not at present a time to enquire into this. Go now, Madam, to your room, and to your bed. Having seen you here is enough to convince me, that the intelligence I have had given me is not without grounds. Come, Miss, as you may perhaps choose to set out again—if you have, as I suspect, the means of opening the door—I shall wait here till you are in bed, and take away the candle."

Monimia,

Monimia, who dreaded nothing so much as that Orlando might ascend the secret stairs, in order to enquire if she was safe, while her aunt was yet with her, hastened to undress herself; and as she feared that, if all were silent in her room, Orlando might speak without the door, which would inevitably discover them at once, she wished, for the first time in her life, that the copious stream of eloquence, with which the pleasure of scolding always supplied Mrs. Lennard might now continue in full force—she therefore contrived to say something which she imagined would produce this, and she succeeded. Provoked at Monimia's attempt to excuse or defend herself, and impatient at being kept from the party below, in which she considered herself, now that her lady and the guests were withdrawn, as the first figure, Mrs. Lennard spared not her words, nor was she very nice in the choice of those epithets which most forcibly expressed her anger against her niece. In the midst of this harangue, Orlando, impatient to know whether Monimia

was

was safe, and unable to set out in search of his brother till he had obtained this satisfaction, softly ascended the narrow stairs, and in a moment was convinced that all their escapes, during this perilous evening, had ended in a complete discovery of their intelligence, for to nothing less could he impute the fury in which Mrs. Lennard appeared to be. Under this impression, his spirits and temper quite exhausted by the various perverse accidents that had within a few hours befallen him—irritated by frequent disappointment, and indignant at the insults to which he believed Monimia was at the moment exposed, he was on the point of bursting into the room, declaring his affection for her, and meeting at once the invectives of her aunt, the renunciation of all his hopes from Mrs. Rayland, and the displeasure of his own family. He blamed himself for not having before taken a step which, whatever might be its future consequence, would at least be decisive, and save Monimia from those cruel alarms and distressing conflicts to which his love had

so long made her liable. But at the moment that his hand was lifted to execute this rash purpose, the storm within seemed to abate: he heard Mrs. Lennard say—"I assure you, that the very next time I see or hear the least grounds for believing you are carrying on such a correspondence, that day shall be the last of your stay under this roof." This gave Orlando hope that they might not be absolutely discovered; and at the same moment the idea of his father made more unhappy, and deploring the fate that gave him two sons equally careless of their duty—of his beloved and affectionate mother weeping at the disobedience of her children—arose forcibly to check his precipitate resolution. He hesitated; he listened; Mrs. Lennard spoke lower, but still in a tone of remonstrance and reproach. He determined to wait to speak to Monimia after her departure, but she seemed not likely to depart; and as he attentively listened to what he could not now very exactly distinguish, the terms in which she expressed her indignation, he

he heard several voices calling him in the park. This was a new alarm—To issue from the lower part of the turret at such an hour, when it was impossible he could have any business there, was not to be thought of: yet the door was not closed, and he believed it not improbable that the people who were he apprehended in search of his brother, might at length seek *him* there; and his intoxication, when he was missing, might lead them to imagine that he might have gone into some of the buildings and have fallen asleep. He descended therefore, and waited at the door. The voices were now at a distance; and apparently being near the apartment of Mrs. Rayland, the persons who had before called aloud were afraid of disturbing her. He seized this opportunity of eluding; and, following the sound, which was still heard at intervals, he met at length the groom and the under footman, who told him that Mr. Philip Somerive had returned about a quarter of an hour before into the room, where he was now so extremely riotous that he had

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got into a quarrel with one of the young farmers; that he had stripped to box; and that every interposition of theirs only served to enrage him more. They therefore besought Orlando to return into the hall, that he might appease and prevail upon his brother to go home; for that their Lady, already alarmed by the noise, had sent down orders to have the house immediately shut up, and for the people to depart. A thousand times during the course of this evening had poor Orlando execrated his own folly, that had thus brought his brother into an house, where, while he had been such an unceasing torment to him, he had probably effectually ruined himself. But there was now not a moment to give way to these repentant reflections. He hastened therefore into the room, where his brother, awakened from the stupor of drunkenness into its most extravagant phrensy, had taken some offence at a young man of the company, and was now withheld only by the united strength of three stout farmers from fighting.

fighting. Orlando for some time argued and implored in vain. The fury of Philip only changed its object, and was directed against him. But with his opponent, whose blunt English spirit was not, as he declared, "at all disposed to yield tamely to the insults of any squire, no not the biggest squire in the king's dominions," the cool reasoning of Orlando had more effect. He soothed then this justly offended rustic, and, promising that Philip should hereafter acknowledge the impropriety of his behaviour, he prevailed on him to depart with Pattenfon and some other of the men into another room; and then his brother being almost exhausted, and relapsing again into stupidity, Orlando wished to conduct him home. This was however, on consideration, found to be impossible; for he was equally unable to ride or walk, even with the assistance which Orlando was very ready to lend him. In this dilemma nothing remained but to put him into his own bed; where, being at a great distance from Mrs. Rayland, there was no probability of her knowing.

knowing the state to which his intemperance had reduced him. This then he determined to do. Pattensoh and a party of the men who were in habits of drinking had already withdrawn : the women were huddling away to their respective homes ; and Orlando, with the help of the groom, carried off the almost senseless Philip to his own bed-chamber, where he left him on his bed ; and then, harassed and unhappy as he was, fatigued with all that had happened, and torn to pieces with anxiety about Morimia, he yet had another task to perform, which he felt, however painful, to be necessary—and this was, to walk to West Wolyerton, that, by his account of Philip, he might quiet the fears of his father as to his personal safety.

He arrived there, quite worn out with uneasiness ; and the pale countenance and dishevelled hair with which he entered the parlour, seemed to confirm all the fears with which the unfortunate Somerive had been tormented, on account of his eldest son. He found him walking backwards
and

and forwards in the parlour, listening to every noise; and he had passed the whole interval in this manner, except that he had now and then gone up stairs to his wife, whom he had prevailed upon to go to bed, to persuade her to mitigate those fears under which he was himself agonized. At this juncture the appearance of Orlando, whose looks seemed to speak only of some sad catastrophe, deprived his father for a moment of the power of asking what intelligence he brought; and when he could speak, it was only to say—"Orlando! your brother?"—"He is far dear Sir," answered Orlando; "pray be not thus alarmed." "Relate then," cried Mr. Somerville in an eager voice, "relate where he is—wretched boy!"—"Indeed, Sir," said Orlando extremely shocked at the look and manner of his father, "you consider this matter more seriously than it deserves, and are more alarmed than the occasion seems to require." He then related what had happened, softening however his brother's folly as much as he could; and assured his father

that he would take care Philip should return in the morning, and that Mrs. Rayland should be kept ignorant of the confusion his intemperance had occasioned.

“You are a noble and excellent creature, Orlando,” cried Somerive, with a sigh as if his heart would break; “but God knows what will become of your unhappy brother. This relapse into debauchery, so degrading, awakens all my fears—fears, which a little subsided on his unexpected return home. But it is not an hour, my dear boy, to detain you with the misery that I see awaits us all. Since you have given up your bed to Philip, I desire you will take one here, while I hasten to quiet the anxiety which has almost overcome your poor mother, who imagined nothing less than that her son was drowned, or that some other horrid calamity had befallen him.”

Mrs Somerive then departed; and Orlando, though somewhat comforted by having the power to relieve the sad solicitude of his parents, was infinitely too uneasy to feel any inclination to sleep, though he was
so

so greatly fatigued. It was by this time daylight; and, after some reflection, he resolved to return back to the Hall, and to await in the library the hour when he should be delivered from the unwelcome inmate whom he had been compelled to admit. Every other anxiety however that assailed him was unfelt, when he thought of the situation in which he had left Monimia. The harsh tones in which the threats of Mrs. Lennard were delivered still rung in his ears; and his fancy represented the lovely victim of her ill humour drowned in tears, yielding to despair, and perhaps recollecting with anguish and regret the moments she had given to his importunate love. It was broad day by the time he returned to the Hall, and the workmen and gardeners were dispersed about the house. He dared not therefore indulge himself with another visit to the turret; but having with some difficulty obtained admittance from the tired and sleepy servants, he wrapped himself in his great coat, and sat down in the Study, where he easily discovered, by the

loud snoring from the adjoining room, that Philip was sleeping away the effects of the powerful draughts of the preceding night. Orlando, half tempted to envy the state of forgetfulness into which he had fallen, occupied himself in reflecting on the strange and perverse accidents of the evening, in which he and Monimia had trembled so often on the brink of discovery—perhaps were discovered, just at the time when they had flattered themselves with the hope that they might the more securely meet. He revolved all that was likely to happen if Mrs. Lennard was really acquainted with their correspondence; and hesitated not to resolve, in that case, to go to his father, to declare his affection for Monimia, and to rescue her from the tyranny of her aunt, whatever might ensue. On the other hand, if their acquaintance yet remained doubtful, or only suspected, he saw that prudence and duty, his tenderness for Monimia, and his affection for his father, equally dictated their present separation; and that, to whichever of these he listened, they agreed in pointing

pointing out his leaving Monimia now, to acquire some establishment which might give them at least a probability, without the breach of any duty, of being happily united hereafter. There was something humiliating to his ingenuous mind, in all the arts and prevarications which their clandestine correspondence compelled him to use himself, and to teach the innocent Monimia. A thousand times he wished that he had been born the son of a day-labourer; that his parents, entertaining for him no views of ambition, had left him to pursue his own inclinations: A thousand times he lamented that Monimia was not circumstanced like Miss Hollyburn, that he might openly have addressed her: and the image of the arrogant heiress arose with redoubled disgust to his mind, when he compared her situation with that of his desolate orphan Monimia. More than three hours passed away while these thoughts were fluctuating in his mind. At the end of that time he was aroused by

the entrance of Betty, who pertly demanded if he did not choose any breakfast?

He desired to have it brought. To which the girl replied, "Perhaps you had rather breakfast with the old women?"—"Whom do you mean?" enquired Orlando.

"Mean!" answered she; "why, who should I mean, but mistress, and mother Leonard? There's no other old woman in the house as I knows on, nor there had not need. They've been enquiring after you."

"After me?"

"Yes," replied Betty. "And Madam I suppose will tie you on to her apron-string soon, for she is never easy without you. Upon my word, Mr. Orlando, you look a little rakish though, I think, for such a *sober* young gentleman, and considering too that you did not demean yourself with dancing—as you used to do with us servants, after the gentlefolks were gone. I warrant however that you did not pass the time at prayers."

"You

“ You give your tongue strange license,” said Orlando, who endeavoured to conceal his vexation, for he imagined that all alluded to Monimia. “ However, do tell me, if Mrs. Rayland wishes me to breakfast with her ?”

“ I know nothing about her wishes,” replied the girl; “ I only know that Lennard have been asking every servant in the house about you, and cross-questioning one so that I suppose she thought I had got you locked up in my cupboard, as they say she used for to have the men-folk in her younger days in the housekeeper’s store-room. The old woman and the oven for that! Set a thief to catch a thief !”

“ I do desire,” said Orlando, “ that you would have done with all this, and tell me whether Mrs. Lennard expects me at breakfast? However,” added he, pausing, “ I will alter my dress, and wait upon her at all events; and do be so good as to prepare in the mean time some breakfast for my brother.”

• Betty then left him apparently with pleasure

sure to execute this last commission; and Orlando, after changing his clothes, went to Mrs. Lennard's room to enquire whether Mrs. Rayland wished to speak to him, and at what time he might wait upon her. This however was not his only motive; he thought he should immediately discern by Mrs. Lennard's reception of him, whether his fears of a partial or an entire discovery were well founded. He fortunately found Mrs Lennard in the housekeeper's room; and, accosting her with his usual interesting address, he enquired how Mrs. Rayland did after the fatigues of the evening, how she was herself, and whether he might at any time that morning make a personal enquiry after Mrs Rayland?

The sage housekeeper received his civilities with great coldness, and answered, even with some asperity, that Mrs. Rayland was much better than ever she could have expected after so much company. "As to your enquiring after her, Sir," added she, "I don't know indeed how that may be; perhaps (fixing on him her penetrating eyes) there

are *other* people in the house after whom you would *rather* ask."

Orlando, whose conscious blood rose into his cheeks at this speech, felt them glow, and the sensation increased his confusion. "No," replied he, hesitating. "No, certainly you cannot suppose . . . that there is any body that I . . . that I wish to enquire after more than Mrs. Rayland I was much afraid that the fatigue would be too much for her."

"There are other people," replied the lady, "who were fatigued also. I must beg the favour of you, Mr. Orlando, not to interfere with my niece. I suppose it was by your desire or contrivance that she took the liberty of leaving her room last night, contrary to my positive orders."

Orlando, a little recovered from his consternation, endeavoured to laugh this off, and was proving to Mrs. Lennard that it was impossible for *him* to have occasioned this disobedience, when a summons came for her to attend Mrs. Rayland; and "I was ordered, Sir," said the footman, "to desire
you

you would come up also, if you were about the house."

Mrs. Lennard now stalked away with great dignity, and Orlando followed her, more than ever alarmed for Monimia.

C H A P. XII.

INSTEAD of the reproaches Orlando expected to hear, Mrs. Rayland received him, if not with so much cordial kindness as usual, at least without any appearance of anger. After the usual compliments on his part, and some enquiries on hers, whether all those who were immediately her guests had gone as soon as they left her, Mrs. Lennard withdrew, and Orlando was left alone with the old Lady, and again trembled lest some remonstrances were to be made; for his mind was so entirely occupied by that subject, that he forgot it was possible for the attention of others to be differently engaged.

His apprehensions increased, when Mrs. Rayland,

Rayland, after a solemn silence, thus began:

"I believe, Mr. Orlando, I have given your abundant proof that I esteem you above the rest of my kinsman's family."

Orlando bowed, and would have said that he was sensible of and grateful for her kindness; he could make nothing of the sentence—but blushed, and faltered while Mrs. Rayland went on.

"Your father has once or twice proposed sending you out into the world, and has consulted me upon the occasion. I suppose you are not unacquainted with the plan he has lately thought proper to propose for you."

Orlando, relieved by hearing that her discourse did not tend whither he feared it would, said that he knew General Tracy had offered his father to procure him a commission; "an offer, Madam," continued he, "of which I waited to hear your opinion before I myself ventured to form any wishes upon the subject."

This was carrying his complaisance far-

ther

ther than he had ever yet done. But, confused and apprehensive as he was, he said any thing which might turn the discourse from what he most dreaded, without having his mind enough at liberty to enquire rigorously into the truth or propriety of what he uttered; and even the independent spirit he had always prided himself on supporting, was lost amid his fears for Monimia.

Mrs. Rayland looked at him steadily for a moment—

“ You are ready then,” said she, “ to follow any line of life, Orlando, which your friends approve ? ”

“ I am, Madam ! and always have been.”

“ And you do not dislike the army ? ”

“ Very far from it, Madam.”

“ I have been accustomed from my youth,” reassumed the old Lady after another pause, “ to consider the profession of arms as one of those which is the least derogatory to the name of a gentleman.”

“ It is honourable, Madam, to any name.”

“ My

“ My grandfather,” continued Mrs. Rayland, “ after whom you were by the permission of our family called—my grandfather, I say, Sir Orlando Rayland, appeared with distinguished honour in the service of his master in 1685, against the rebel Monmouth, though not of the religion of King James. My father Sir Hildebrand distinguished himself under Marlborough, when he was a younger brother, and saw much service in Flanders. Of remoter ancestors, I could tell you of Raylands who bled in the civil wars; we were always Lancastrians, and lost very great property by our adherence to that unhappy family during the reigns of Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third. My great great grandfather, who was also called Orlando”

Mrs. Rayland had soon totally forgotten the young hero who was before her, while she ran over the names and exploits of heroes past; and, lost in their loyalty and their prowess, she forgot that hardly any other record of them remained upon earth than what her memory and their pictures

in the gallery above afforded. Orlando, however, heard her not only with patience but with pleasure. In recurring thus to them when the question of his professional choice was before her, it appeared that she had somehow associated the idea of his future welfare with that of their past consequence; and besides the satisfaction this discovery afforded him, he began to hope that his fears of any discovery were quite groundless.

Mrs. Rayland having at length completed the catalogue of the warriors of her family, and having no more to say, returned to the subject which had given rise to this discussion.—“Therefore, young kinsman, I say that, if this worthy General Tracy will favour you with his countenance, if your father and your relations approve of it, and if you yourself are disposed for the profession of arms, I shall be glad not only to give you some assistance towards setting out, but to aid you from time to time in such means of promotion as the General may point out to me.”

Orlando,

Orlando, who now found the whole affair decided, felt one pang at the certainty which presented itself, that he must quit, soon quit his beloved Monimia; it was severe, but momentary: and with equal warmth and sincerity he thanked Mrs. Rayland for her goodness, and assured her that he was ready to avail himself of her generous intentions in his favour.

"But are you sure, Mr. Orlando," added Mrs. Rayland interrupting his acknowledgements—"are you quite sure that no unworthy connection, no improper attachment here, will make the departure for your regiment disagreeable to you?"

The blood that had so often been the treacherous emissary of conscience before, now flew to the cheeks of Orlando; indeed his whole countenance changed so much that Mrs. Rayland, though not very clear-sighted, perceived it. Her brow took that severe look which it almost always lost in the presence of her young favourite—"I see," cried she, observing Orlando still
hesitate—

hesitate. "I see that I have not been misinformed."

Every thing seemed to depend on the presence of mind which he was at this moment able to exert. He recovered himself, and said, in a firm and calm tone, "I know not, Madam, what information you have received; but this I know, and do most solemnly assure you, that I have no unworthy connection, no improper attachment—and," added he, animated by reflecting that his love for the innocent, amiable Monimia was neither—"and when you discover that I deceive you, I am content to relinquish your favour for ever."

"Indeed you will lose it," answered Mrs. Rayland, a little relaxing of her severity;—"and that I may still have the pleasure of supposing you worthy my good opinion, and that well disposed young man which I have always wished to find you, your leaving this place a while may not be amiss. I know how to make some allowance for the arts of wicked girls; but I shall

shall take care that no such person disgraces my family for the future. In regard to you, cousin, I hope you are above any such unworthy thoughts. It must be my business to give proper directions for the rest, and for the due regulations of my family. You will prepare, cousin, for your commission, which the worthy General tells me he expects every day: he assures me it is worth upwards of four hundred pounds. Your father is very happy in having met with a real friend."—Orlando, thunder-struck by a speech which he believed related to Monimia, stood like a statue. It was fortunate for him that Mrs. Rayland, after the words wicked girls, continued to speak; for, had she not done so, Orlando would infallibly have betrayed himself by entering into a warm defence of Monimia; he would indeed have confessed, without reserve, their long attachment, and frequent interviews: but the rest of her speech, and the entrance of Mrs. Lennard, for whom she rang just as she concluded it, gave him time to recollect himself: yet when Mrs. Rayland,

Rayland, in her usual way; dismissed him, he doubted whether his honour and his love did not call upon him to come to an immediate explanation. The consideration and kindness which Mrs. Rayland expressed for him, so unlike the usual prudish asperity of her disposition, were offensive and hateful to him when he believed she acquitted him at the expence of Monimia. He hastened however to his own apartment, because it was necessary to see what was become of his brother. It was some alleviation to his confusion and distress to find Philip was gone; and he sat down, endeavouring to collect his thoughts, and to determine on what was to be done.

That Monimia was on his account to be dismissed from the house of Mrs. Rayland, and the protection of her only relation, the circumstances of the preceding night, added to what he had just heard, left him but little reason to doubt. What then was to become of her? and how could he make her any reparation for the injury he had done her, but by instantly declaring the truth,

truth, and relinquishing all prospect of future prosperity, from which she must be excluded?—Desperate as he felt this step to be, he was in a state of mind that urged him to decide on any thing that might bring their fate to a crisis: and, believing himself finally determined, he started up from this short counsel with himself, and was going hastily to the apartment of Mrs. Rayland, when at the door he was stopped by Betty, who, with her hat on, and a small bundle in her hand, dropped him a curtsy, and said, with an arch smile, “ I’m come to take my leave of you, Squire, and to wish you well.”

“ Whither are you going then, Betty ?” said Orlando.

“ Lord, Sir,” cried the girl, “ you’re such another hard-hearted gentleman !—What ! I warrant you don’t know that Madam have sent me down my wages, with orders to go out of her house directly, and all upon your account.”

“ Upon my account !”—“ Pattenison it seems have been telling more false lies to
Madam.”

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Madam. He won't believe ever since that night that somebody was seen in your room—I don't know who, nor I—but that you and I be too great: Madam Lennard would never hear on't till to-day; but now they've found out, by laying their old noddles together, that I was out of the house last night, and they says 'twas along a you. Knowing my own innocence, I bears it all; for I be clear of the charge, as you know very well: I wish every body could say as much; but I know what I know."

Orlando now instantly comprehended that it was of Betty Mrs. Rayland had spoken, and not of the innocent Monimia, whom his own rash impatience was again on the point of betraying. Sensible of his good fortune in having been thus prevented, he was still confused and agitated. "Whatever you know, Betty," said he, "of me, I am at least very sorry you have, by any mistake relative to me, lost your place, and Mrs. Lennard's favour."

"As to *her* favour," answered the girl simply, "I value it no more than that; and she had better keep her tongue within

her teeth about me, I can tell ~~you~~ that; and as for places, there's more in the world. One should have a fine time on't, indeed, to pass all one's life in this here old dunger, among rats, and ghosts, and old women. However, young 'Squire, I advise you, as a friend, to take more care for the future: some people are very fly; but for my part I scorn to betray 'um—but mayhap the next housemaid mid'nt be so willing as I have been to bear the blame for things she's as innocent of as the child unborn."

"I cannot tell to what you allude," replied Orlando in a hurried voice; "but this I know, that if I have done you any injury, I am very sorry for it, and willing to make you any reparation in my power." He then took a guinea from his pocket—"Accept of this," cried he, "and be assured I shall on any future occasion be happy to serve you."—The girl took the guinea, but without expressing any gratitude either for that, or his apparent wishes to make her what amends he could for the loss of her place:—she flippantly told him, . . . ; the

the hopes, for all Madam's injustice, and the malice of her enemies, she had *friends* who would not let her be beholden to nobody—She then left the house.

Orlando, thus relieved from the most acute uneasiness he had ever suffered, returned to his room. He most ardently wished to communicate to Monimia the joy he felt in finding that the suspicions excited by so many awkward circumstances, had by some means or other fallen upon this servant; and apparently without doing her any injury, which would have considerably lessened his satisfaction. Far from regretting her dismissal, she seemed pleased with having had an opportunity given her to be dismissed; and Orlando, who had long known her to be a very improper associate for Monimia, found many reasons to be glad of her departure. That she knew, or very strongly suspected their meetings, seemed very evident; she was much less dangerous any where than within the house—and as to what she might say without, which might be prejudicial to the

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he character of Monimia, he determined to prevent the ill effects of that where it might be most prejudicial, by confessing, before he left the country, the very extent of his fault to his father, who already suspected so much of the truth.

However earnestly he wished to speak to Monimia, and however uneasy the idea of her suspense and dejection made him, he could find no opportunity of speaking to her during the morning, without hazard, which he had too recently suffered for, so immediately to incur again. Though Mrs. Lennard had artfully made Betty the victim, there was still reason to believe she was not without suspicions; and to irritate or increase them now, would be to preclude himself from the last pleasure he was likely to taste during the rest of his short residence at the Hall — the pleasure of soothing his beloved Monimia, and, at the few interviews which they might yet obtain, reconciling her soft heart to the necessity of that separation that was so soon to happen.

He -

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He was summoned to dinner with Mrs. Rayland, who seemed pleased to find he was still at the Hall. Never did the old Lady appear in such good humour with him, or so relaxed from the starch prudery of her usual character.—She gave way to her love of telling anecdotes and stories of her own family; and, pleased with the attention Orlando gave to her narratives, she hinted to him, though still with great ambiguity, that it would be his own fault if he was not one day or other the representative of a family so illustrious. She then spoke of his elder brother with anger and contempt, which Orlando generously tried to soften; of his mother with her usual coldness and dislike; and of his sisters as good, pretty-behaved girls—“that is,” I mean, the two youngest. As to Miss Belle—she’s a London lady already: I protest it hurts me to see young women so bold—but she has been cried up for a beauty. ’Tis vanity ruins all girls—no good is ever to be expected from them when once they get

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conceited notions into their heads of being handsome."

Orlando undertook the defence of his sister with more zeal than prudence; but Mrs. Rayland, though not to be convinced that Isabella was not a vain coquet, which indeed her unguarded gaiety gave the old Lady very good reason to believe, was however in a humour to be pleased with all Orlando said. Her attachment to him had been long insensibly increasing, and though, like another Elizabeth, she could not bear openly to acknowledge her successor, she was as little proof as the royal ancient virgin, against the attractions of an amiable and handsome young man, whom she loved to consider as the child of her bounty, and the creature of her smiles. Though determined to keep him dependent during her life, and even to send him out a soldier of fortune, she really meant to give him, at her death, the whole of her landed property; and the machinations of Pattenfon, whose jealousy and avarice alike excited his hatred to Orlando, had hitherto had an effect

fect

fect so different from what he expected, that he found his politics entirely baffled, and that he was more likely to lose, by farther attempts, his Lady's regard, than to shake that she entertained for the young favourite.

A few years before, the very suspicion of an intrigue would have shut for ever the doors of Rayland Hall against the supposed delinquent; but now the attempts to impute such to Orlando had ended in nothing but the dismissing a servant—a circumstance proving at once, that though some credit was given to the accusation, no resentment towards him was entertained.

Mrs. Lennard, who had more sense and more art than Pattenon, and who had opportunities more closely to observe her Lady, had long seen the progress of her affection for Orlando, and long ceased to counteract it.—She was not weak enough to imagine, as Pattenon did, that such great property as Mrs. Rayland possessed would be divided among her servants—but she knew

that she should herself possess a very considerable legacy; and she thought it better that Orlando should inherit the bulk of the fortune, than either his father, who had always considered the old servants about her as his enemies, or any public charity—to some of which Mrs. Rayland had, in former fits of ill humour, expressed an intention to leave the Rayland estate.

Mrs. Rayland had, in common with many old people, a strange aversion to speaking of her will, or of what was to happen after her death; and far advanced as she was in life, she talked of future years as if she believed herself immortal. Mrs. Lennard had, however, once seen part of a will—with which, in respect to herself, she had great reason to be satisfied. She knew that Mrs. Rayland had lately made another, to which she was not a witness;—for such was the peculiarity of her Lady in this respect, that she had sent for a lawyer and witnesses from London, that none of the neighbouring attornies, or even her confidential

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Confidential servants, might know its contents. Mrs. Lennard did not doubt but that Orlando was in this made heir of almost all the landed property; but she had no reason, from Mrs. Rayland's behaviour to her, to apprehend that this new will was at all prejudicial to herself.

Still, however, it was not her interest to encourage the affection which many circumstances gave her reason to believe Orlando entertained for her niece. She knew that, if the rashness of youth and passion should urge them to marry, it would not only ruin Orlando, who would then be a beggar; but that she should herself be accused of having promoted this fatal indiscretion, and lose her own advantages without obtaining any for her niece, whom she by no means wished to see independent of her, even if independence could thus have been obtained; and whom she treated with redoubled rigour, when she found reason to believe that Orlando felt for her the attachment which she had from their childhood foreseen and attempted to prevent.

The more Orlando gained on the favour of Mrs. Rayland, the more apprehensive Mrs. Lennard became of his affection for Monimia: she had however persuaded herself, that, with the precautions she took, their clandestinely meeting or carrying on any correspondence was impracticable; and, satisfied that Monimia was confined to her room, her vigilance had now and then slumbered. But it awakened by the late reports that obtained in the house and about the country; reports which originated in the gossip of Orlando's nocturnal visitor; of his being missing at unusual hours, and from Betty's hints. When, therefore, Pattenon's jealousy was so far roused as to urge him to speak to his Lady of a supposed intimacy between Orlando and this his faithless favourite, Mrs. Lennard let it make its impression; and Betty's pertness, who had before agreed with Philip Someive to take the first opportunity of going off to him, gave her a pretence immediately to discharge her. Mrs. Rayland, content to part with her favourite

favourite Orlando, because she thought it for his advantage to see something of the world in an honourable profession—and because she believed, if youth and idleness had concurred with the art of the girl with whom he was accused, to lead him into any improper connection, this was the best way to break it—determined on his departure with satisfaction, since the General assured her there was at present no probability of his leaving England.

Mrs. Leonard, who thought herself fortunate in having all the suspicions fall on Betty, kept as a profound secret those she entertained herself relative to Monimia, whom she resolved narrowly to watch till Orlando was gone. And Pattenfon, glad that the young minion was to go, as he termed it, for a soldier, reconciled himself by that reflection to the failure of his original plan, which had been totally to ruin him with Mrs. Rayland. As to the loss of his fair one, he knew she would not remove far; and that repentment for his accu-

sations would not make her long relent-
less, while he had presents, and money to
offer her.

Such were, at this juncture, the politics
of Rayland Hall.

C H A. P. XIII.

THE house of West Worverton too had its politicians; but none of them were so content with their past operations, or future prospects, as the venerable group last described.

Isabella, wild and coquettish as she was, could no longer affect to misunderstand the language with which General Tracy ventured to address her. For some time, however, she attempted to laugh it off; but at length resolved, by the counsel of Selina, to speak to her mother, and entreat that, if the General remained any longer their guest, she might not be so often left to hear professions so insulting, which the presence of her sisters did not always restrain. Mrs. Somerive, whose heart was half-broken by the behaviour of Philip, and who saw, with
 inexpressible

inexpressible anguish, the ravage which the uneasiness arising from that source was hourly making on the constitution of her husband, had been fondly flattering herself, during the first weeks of the General's visit, that in him Mr. Somerive had found a sincere friend, and their children a powerful protector. The solicitude he expressed for Orlando, and the consideration with which he treated Philip, made her sanguinely believe that he would provide for one, and possibly reclaim the other. The sums which the latter had won from him at play—Mrs. Somerive, who knew nothing of their nightly gambling, supposed the General had lent him; when her heart, overflowing with gratitude towards this generous friend, was suddenly struck with the intelligence Isabella gave her.

She at first fancied the vanity of Isabella might have given meaning to his expressions which they were never meant to convey; but, upon questioning her and Selina repeatedly, and from the observations she made the two following days, she was con-

vinced that their representations of his behaviour were just. This cruel certainty she determined however to conceal from her husband, and to guard, by her own prudent watchfulness, against the artifices of the General, without bringing off a rupture between him and Somerive that might be attended with consequences she sickened to think of.

The General, however, who paid her the most assiduous court, was soon sensible of a change in her manners; for she was incapable of the dissimulation which people of the world so successfully practise. From hence, and from the behaviour of Isabella, the General found that a longer stay would betray his insidious designs without contributing at all to their success, and he prepared to go; yet could not bear to relinquish for ever his hopes of gaining Isabella, with whom he was more in love than ever. He lingered, therefore, notwithstanding all the discouragement he received; and Somerive, who believed him the best and most sincere friend that ever man had, communicated

nicated to him all his affairs, and all his anxiety—by which the General perceived plainly, he was in such a state of mind as must hasten him to the grave; and he had learned that, impressed with ideas of his (the General's) friendship for all his family, he had made him executor, and trusted the welfare of his wife and daughters entirely to him and to Orlando.

Though Tracy therefore could neither give up his pursuit, nor succeed in it at present, he believed that the death of the father, the indigence to which the whole family would be reduced, and the absence of Orlando, would together make easy the project of obtaining Isabella for a mistress; and that patience and dissimulation alone were necessary to keep up his influence in the family, till they should be wholly in his power. He determined, therefore, to check himself; to make no more professions with which Isabella could be offended, but to express his contrition that he had said what she construed into want of respect; to hint remotely at honourable intentions;

tentions, and thus, without engaging himself, or, as the fashionable phrase is, committing himself, to retain his influence over the whole family, as well as over the father; and to be assured that, whenever he chose to return, he should be received with pleasure. As to any suspicion that Isabella might think him of an age so disproportionate as to hear even his honourable offers with disdain and ridicule, it never occurred to the General; and he was pretty well assured, from the pecuniary circumstances of the family, that every other member of it would receive the remotest hint of an intended alliance with transport. The behaviour of Mrs. Somerive, on the evening of the tenants' ball, convinced him that Isabella had not merely threatened when she protested she would speak to her mother of his behaviour; and he found that though Mr. Somerive, whenever he talked of going, pressed his stay, it was time to depart.

The messenger, who was sent to the post town on the following evening for letters,

letters, brought to General Tracy a large packet, arrived that day by the stage. On opening it, it was found to contain the commission of an ensign for Orlando Somerive, executed in due form, from the War Office.) This he hastened to offer, with a florid speech, to Mrs. Somerive; who had hardly recovered from the emotions with which the sight of it, and his peculiar and studied manner of presenting it, occasioned, when Orlando, anxious to know at what time his brother had got home, and how his mother and sisters were after the fatigue and uneasiness of the night before, arrived.

On his first entrance, he enquired eagerly after his brother.—“Your brother!” cried Mr. Somerive; “he is not at home, Orlando, nor have we seen him since last night:—believing he was with you, and indeed supposing it possible that he was not well enough to leave your apartment, I made myself tolerably easy about him.—But when did he leave you? and where is he now?”

Orlando

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Orlando replied, that he had left his bed about eleven o'clock ; and then, to quiet the uneasiness which he saw this unexpected absence gave to them all, he added, " But he is gone, I dare say, to Mr. Stockton's, where he has talked some time of intending to pass a day or two, and probably will not return home till to-morrow or next day."

" Gone to Mr. Stockton's !" exclaimed Mrs. Somerive—" What! without linen or change of clothes, though there is an house full of company ?"

Mr. Somerive, who saw how much his wife was alarmed and affected, endeavoured to speak lightly of the absence of her son—" You know, my love," said he, " that Philip does not pique himself on being a beau ; and that the party at Mr. Stockton's are only men. He can probably borrow any linen he wants of his friends ; and as he means to be at home so soon, and has no servant with him, perhaps preferred doing so to the trouble of sending home for his own." Mrs. Somerive sighed, and cast
a desponding

a desponding look on her husband, who added, "But, come, my dear Bella, you and I have something to say to Orlando—we will go all together into my study for a few moments, and the girls will have tea ready against our return."—So saying, he took his wife's hand, and, Orlando following them, they left the room.

Mrs. Somerive was no sooner released from the restraint which the presence of the General imposed, than she threw herself into a chair, and fell into an agony of tears. Her husband gently chid her for emotion which he endeavoured to persuade her was much beyond the occasion; and, having succeeded in rendering her somewhat more calm, he told Orlando that his commission was arrived, and enquired whether any conversation had passed between him and Mrs. Rayland in consequence of what had been held between her and General Tracy the preceding evening? Orlando related it all as nearly as he could recollect it, save only that sentence which related to some fancied attachment; and Mr. Somerive received,

received, with great pleasure, what appeared to him equal to a confirmation of the most sanguine hopes he had ever entertained on his son's behalf.—Mrs. Somerive however was less elated: she could not comprehend how Mrs. Rayland, if she had so much affection for Orlando, could not only bear to part with him, but promote his departure; or how, if she meant to make him her heir, she could determine to send him out in the world a foldier of fortune. The representations of her husband, however, and the content which Orlando expressed, reconciled her by degrees to what she could not now recall. She gave him, but not without many tears, the commission with which General Tracy had just presented her—but as she tried to give him her blessing with it, she relapsed into convulsive sorrow. Mr. Somerive found it would only distress her to return to the parlour; he therefore bade Orlando lead his mother to her own room, while he, returning to where his daughters were sitting with

General

General Tracy, bade them go to her, and send their brother down to the parlour.

Orlando, on his entrance, addressed himself to Tracy, whom he thanked in the most graceful terms. The General answered his compliment with politeness, and the three gentlemen then began to discourse of the departure of Orlando for that party of his regiment that were in England, which Tracy told him could not properly be deferred longer than till the following week. He advised therefore that Orlando should set out for London on the following Monday—"when," said he, "as I shall go thither myself, I can have the pleasure of giving you a place in my post-chaise."

—Mr. Somerive, while he expressed regret that the General was to leave him so soon (though his stay had been prolonged to almost six weeks), yet embraced this offer with avidity. He foresaw, that in the equipment of Orlando, of which Mrs. Rayland was, he understood, to defray the expence, the directions of such a friend could not fail of being extremely useful,
and

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and that his instructions might in a thousand more material instances be of advantage to him.—It was therefore settled among them, that, on the evening of the following Sunday, Orlando should take leave of his ancient benefactress, and repair to his father's house, to be ready to attend General Tracy to town the next morning.

Orlando was now impatient to return to the Hall—He hoped to have a few moments conversation with Monimia that evening; alas! only one more was to intervene before his departure: and the painful task of reconciling her to his going so soon and of taking a long—long leave, seemed to require an age.—His restlessness became so evident that his father noticed it—"You will stay here to-night, Orlando?" said he. "No, Sir," answered his son; "I wish with your leave to return to the Hall.—Mrs. Rayland often asks for me at breakfast, and you will allow that just at this period I should not seem in the slightest degree to neglect her."—"You are right in returning," said Mr. Somerive, fixing his eyes steadily

steadily on those of his son, "Is that *your only* motive?"—Orlando, not able to bear the penetrating looks of his father, turned away, and said hastily—"Besides, Sir, I wish to enquire after my brother—for, however I affected before my mother to believe he was at Stockton's, I assure you I do not know he is there, nor have I any guesses about him but what makes me uneasy."—"Go, then," replied his father with a deep sigh—"but remember, Orlando, that from *you* I expect sincerity."—"And you shall not be disappointed, Sir," answered Orlando warmly; "before I take my leave of you, and ask your last blessing, my heart shall be laid open to you, which I would rather pierce with my own hand than suffer it to harbour ingratitude or dissimulation towards so good a father."—Tears were in the eyes of the father and the son.—"Orlando!" said Somerive in a faltering voice, "go to your mother before you leave the house, and give her all the comfort you can—the absence of your brother overwhelms her with fear and distress;

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